




ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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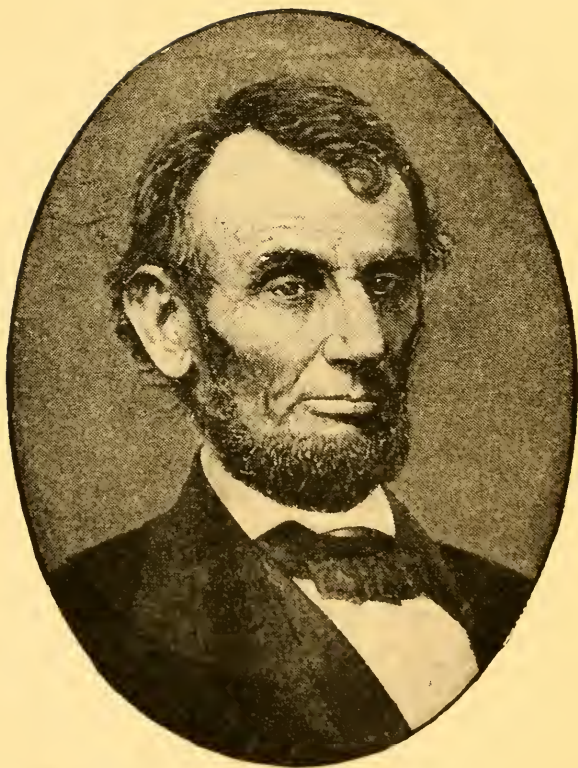
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A. Lincoln

THE WORLD'S WORKERS

Abraham Lincoln

BY

ERNEST FOSTER

*Author of "Heroes of the Indian Empire" "Men of Note: their
Boyhood and Schooldays" etc.*

Seventeenth Thousand

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



CHAPTER I.

THE CABIN IN THE WILDERNESS.

BEFORE a log fire there sits a boy, between eight and nine years old. In front of him is a rough slab of wood ; in his hand is a short stick, which now and again he holds in the flames, and when the point of it is charred, he carefully forms letters and words with it on the board. Then, after he has thus covered the whole surface, he shaves off the writing with a knife, and begins again.

The little lad is Abraham Lincoln, and it is with such strange substitutes for pencil and slate as these that he who in course of time will become President of the United States is teaching himself penmanship.

Let us glance at the humble home, and the surroundings of Abraham at this time ; then we shall be better able to understand how it was that he was occupied in the way we have seen.

It was in a rough log cabin, in the midst of

a wilderness, that Abraham was now living. He had been born in Hardin County, Kentucky, in the year 1809; but his parents, though they had resided nearly all their life in that State, having become dissatisfied with their prospects there, had in 1816 removed to Indiana; and here—near where Gentryville now stands—the rest of Abraham's boyhood was spent.

Hard had been Abraham's lot, even before his home was removed from Kentucky, for though he and his one sister enjoyed the blessing of a loving mother and a kind father, yet the privations of the family were very great, and both parents had to work incessantly to keep the wolf from the door. And when they had moved into Indiana, matters were not much improved, and, as we shall see, Abraham had himself, at an early age, to take his part in earning bread for the little household.

Those who live in towns and cities cannot easily form an idea of the daily life of settlers and "pioneers," as they were called, like the Lincolns; yet they were only one of many families, who, at long distances from each other, sought at that time to gain a livelihood by opening up and cultivating the untrodden forest land of their country. Such a life meant incessant toil: it meant the isolation of the family from friends and relatives; it meant, often, poverty and hardships of every kind. And this was the lot of Abraham's family; and when we have fully realised

how poor and comfortless was his home, how hard his life, and how many were his disadvantages, the greater will be our marvel that from such a wretched beginning Abraham should have been able to attain so glorious an end.

When Mr. Lincoln first arrived in Indiana, in 1816, he set up a rude dwelling—called a “half-faced camp;” and we can form some idea of this miserable abode when we learn that it was a rough hut of poles, which was enclosed on only three sides, while the fourth was quite open. In this shed, for it was nothing more, Abraham with his parents and sister had to spend their first year in Indiana; and it was not until the end of that time that Mr. Lincoln was able to erect a better dwelling-place.

The new log cabin, though stronger and warmer than the old one, was, however, a very poor habitation, and had but one room and a loft above it. It had no floor, and no furniture except a few three-legged stools, while the only bedstead consisted of a rough crotch of wood covered with leaves; and into this, which was occupied by their parents, little Abraham and his sister would, we are told, creep on winter nights, when their own rough couch on the ground was too cold for them to remain in it.

From this time forward—that is, after the completion of the new cabin in the building of which he had assisted by cutting poles and logs—Abraham, young as he was, began to help his father in the

work of clearing the forest land around their dwelling. Great trees had to be cut down with the axe, and the stumps either burned, or sometimes pulled, with all their tangled roots, from the ground ; the timber had to be piled into heaps, or cleared away ; the land had to be harrowed, or, when it was sufficiently free from roots, ploughed, so that seeds and vegetables might be planted ; and in all these operations, as well as in the other kinds of work there were to do, young Lincoln willingly took his share. Oxen were at that time used in ploughing, harrowing, and other agricultural work ; and we can picture Abraham's delight when he was old enough to assist in yoking the teams to the rough implements that were employed, or to walk by their side when the ploughing or harrowing was going on.

It was when he was very young, too, that Abraham learnt the use of the rifle, in which all settlers had to be skilled, for it was by its aid that they secured much of their food ; and it is related that when he was but a child he astonished his parents by one day shooting and killing a great wild turkey, which he brought in triumph to his mother.

But though Abraham was always willing and eager to help his father in the way I have told you, whether as wood-cutter or ploughboy, or indeed in whatever capacity he was needed, there was another pursuit which at this time occupied not a little of his thought and attention, and the bent of his mind in this direc-

tion had been gradually, but most clearly, showing itself ever since the family had settled in Indiana. This was a constant endeavour to seek information of every sort.

Before his parents had removed from Kentucky, they had contrived to afford the lad some schooling, though, with his sister, he had actually to walk eight miles each day to obtain it; but it was for a very short time that he had attended school, nor does he seem to have been taught anything except a little writing and spelling. And though, as we shall see, he went to school in Indiana a few years later, yet, as Lincoln used in after life to say, he "did not, during all his boyhood, receive instruction for more than six months altogether."

But the days spent at the Kentucky school were far from having been thrown away, and, few though they were, they engendered in him that thirst for knowledge and that longing for study which were soon to be so strongly developed in him. So, when only between eight and nine years of age, we find Abraham, during every moment that he can spare from his work in the forest, devoting himself as far as he can to self-improvement, and turning to the best account the little instruction he had received from his teacher. And thus it is that we see him practising penmanship in the queer manner referred to at the beginning of this chapter; for slates and pencils and paper, it must be remembered, were

scarce, and not easily obtainable in the remote place where he was living.

Still, the boy's opportunities for learning much were very few at this period ;—and the only books which the Lincoln family possessed were the Bible, the Catechism, and a spelling-book. But he was not daunted. The lack of books only made him study the few he had the more closely ; and these he was soon able not only to read, but the last two he knew by heart, and he could repeat many chapters from the Bible.

And thus learning all he could, with the limited means at his command, and—though almost hoping against hope for more books and greater facilities for getting on—yet never discouraged, three years in Indiana passed, during which time one or two events happened of which I must tell you.

The first was one which must have been very welcome to the Lincoln family. It was the settlement in the “half-faced camp”—which they had vacated, and which adjoined their cabin—of an aunt and uncle of Mrs. Lincoln, named Sparrow, together with a nephew named Dennis Hanks. To Abraham, especially, the coming of these relatives to the lonely spot where he lived was a great joy ; for not only was it pleasanter to have them living close to his home, but in Dennis, who was but a lad, he found one who would naturally be his companion and play-mate. And, though of almost opposite dispositions,

the two boys were soon fast friends, and always remained so.

In the year following the arrival of the Sparrows, another event of a different kind happened, and the gloom which it brought to the Lincoln family was very deep. A disease, called milk-fever, unfortunately prevalent at that time in Western America, broke out about twenty miles from the Lincoln cabin, and in a short time not only were Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow fatally attacked, but, worse than all, Mrs. Lincoln was stricken down by it, and in a few days Abraham was motherless.

Living in such a spot as that in which their home was situated, there was no place of worship which the Lincolns could attend ; and Mrs. Lincoln was therefore buried in the forest by her husband. Mr. Lincoln, however, knew that about seventy-five miles away there was a minister who occasionally in the journeyings he made visited his district ; and having a strong wish that a service should be held over his wife's grave, he naturally thought of Mr. Elkins—that was his name—and determined if possible to ask him to come for that purpose. But there was a great difficulty. It was too far to travel to fetch him, even if he were certain of the minister's precise whereabouts at the time ; he was unable to write ; so he was in a serious dilemma.

The difficulty was overcome, and in a most unlooked-for manner. Much to the astonishment of

his father—who, it must be said, had not paid much heed to the boy's attempt at self-education—his little son offered to write and ask the minister to come.

And it was in response to this, the first letter which Abraham had ever written, that before many weeks Mr. Elkins visited the cabin, and held a service over the grave of Mrs. Lincoln.

CHAPTER II.

ON LIFE'S THRESHOLD

TIME now passed on, and in little more than twelve months, when Abraham was nearly eleven years of age, another important change took place in the Lincoln household. Abraham's father had determined to marry again; and journeying into Kentucky he there wedded a widow, Mrs. Johnston, with whom—together with her son and two daughters—he returned to the cabin in Indiana, where they all took up their abode.

Abraham's life, since Mrs. Lincoln died, had been very dreary—more dreary than we can picture; and it was a glad day for him when his father brought the new mother to him and his sister.

The second Mrs. Lincoln, we are told, was a most excellent woman; and, not only did she at once make herself beloved by Abraham, by reason of her

kindness and tenderness to him, but she was the possessor of such a stock of household furniture and of other articles sadly lacking in the cabin as made Abraham and his sister and Dennis Hanks open their eyes in wonderment when they saw them. For the first time some "real chairs" were seen in the Lincoln dwelling; for the first time the children had warm beds and clothing provided for them; for the first time, too, the log cabin possessed a floor (which Mrs. Lincoln had soon induced her husband to put down) and was made otherwise cosy and homelike. "In fact," said Dennis Hanks in later years, "in a few weeks all had changed; and where everything was wanting, now all was snug and comfortable. She was a woman of great energy, of remarkable good sense, very industrious and saving, and also very neat and tidy in her person and manners, and knew exactly how to manage children. . . . She soon dressed Abe up in entire new clothes, and from that time on he appeared to lead a new life. . . . The two sets of children got along finely together, as if they had been the children of the same parents."

The sunshine thus suddenly brought to little Abraham's life was by no means confined to the solid comforts which his new mother introduced to his home. In Mrs. Lincoln he found one who soon proved to be a loving friend and counsellor to him, and who took a real interest in all that concerned his

welfare ; while he, on his part, was only too ready to return the affection she had for him—affection which never changed to the day of her death.

A shrewd, sensible woman, she was not long either in discovering that Abraham was no ordinary boy ; and when she came, little by little, to learn from him of the uphill work he had had in his search after knowledge ever since he had been in Indiana ; when he showed her the progress he had made in penmanship, and told of the means by which he had contrived to practise it ; and when he, as was only natural, appealed to her to help him, he received the very encouragement he needed, and which had hitherto been denied to him. For though their love for Abraham and his sister was very great, yet it must be remembered that both Mr. Lincoln and his first wife were very poor and ignorant ; and that, therefore, apart from their hard struggle for existence in the forest occupying nearly all their thoughts, neither of them was able to detect the signs which Abraham gave of his natural ability.

Abraham's library of three books had a little while before this received an addition in the form of copies of "The Pilgrim's Progress" and "Æsop's Fables," and his delight in possessing these can be imagined. But Mrs. Lincoln, who had received some education herself, now helped him in many ways, as well as answered some of the numberless questions he put to her ; and the eager boy was indeed happy in

having one who so lovingly assisted him and sympathised with his aims. From her, too, he inherited the reverence for holy things, the simple faith and profound trust in Providence, as well as the amiability and gentleness for which in after life he became distinguished.

In a little while Mrs. Lincoln was able to help him in another way. Owing to other settlers having recently come within a few miles of the Lincoln cabin, a log hut had been erected at a short distance away, and was to be used as a school-house. To this she at once determined to send Abraham; and thither he went. An old, tattered arithmetic was bought by his father at a market some miles away; armed with this, Abraham attended the school; and, in a remarkably short time, he had made considerable progress in ciphering and spelling—especially in the latter.

But unfortunately this school was not kept up more than a few weeks; and so, once more, Abraham had to rely upon such help as his step-mother could give him, and upon his own exertions. Four years later he again attended school, and, curiously enough, though so long afterwards, in the same log hut as the one just mentioned. To this one, however, like the others, he went for only a little while; but his attendance at it is of interest for more than one reason.

First, it was here that the only real instruction of any consequence he ever had was received—for though three years later he went to yet another teacher he

learned nothing from him—and here, too, we find the master quick in recognising Abraham's abilities, and frequently speaking of him as being likely to rise in the world.

It was at this school that, we are told, Abraham, in addition to other lessons, was taught, "manners and etiquette and deportment"—accomplishments of which probably the children of the pioneer settlers of those days stood much in need! Thus the various scholars—boys and girls attending together—would one by one be asked to go outside, and then to enter for the purpose of being properly introduced to the other children assembled in the "schoolroom," the latter being taught how to bow in response, and so on. A strange sight indeed it must have been to see these roughly clad and roughly reared children of the forest learning some of the habits and customs of civilised life!

In this school, too, Abraham seems to have distinguished himself by writing little essays on Kindness to Animals, a subject in which he was deeply interested; and it is noticeable that young Lincoln, when amusing himself with his school companions, never lost an opportunity of protesting against the cruelties to dumb creatures in which they too frequently indulged. One instance of torture on their part is recorded, and this was the placing of live coals on the backs of tortoises caught by the boys, in order to cause them to walk faster. And

when Abraham found them doing this, he forcibly prevented them, though mocked at and ridiculed for his pains.

So it will be seen that, though, as already stated, Abraham's school days were few in number, yet, by hook or by crook, he had succeeded in making marked progress in the acquisition of knowledge. The secret of it was that he never missed any opportunity that presented itself, however small, for storing up in his mind information on any subject, no matter what pains were necessary to effect his purpose.

As an illustration of this, it is told of him that when he was about the age of sixteen, Abraham had heard from a companion that one of the neighbouring settlers, a Mr. Crawford, possessed a "Life of George Washington." In great trepidation, the boy visited the log house where the precious book was, and begged to be allowed to borrow it, promising to return it in safety, and the owner consented to lend it to him.

A book such as this—telling him of all that the famous soldier and President had done for his country, describing the great battles and exciting adventures during the Revolution in America—was, of all others, one that would impress and interest Abraham. And knowing, as we do, the yearning which he had for books at this time—a yearning which he had been able to gratify to only a small extent—we can picture his gladness as he carried the prize home. We may

be sure, too, that he now devoted to the study of it every minute he could spare after his hard work in the forest—most probably asking his kind step-mother anything he could not quite understand in it.

But a catastrophe was in store. One night he put down the book, in a safe place, as he thought ; but to his dismay, the next morning saw it soaked through with water ; for the rain had beaten in through a crack in the cabin, and quite spoilt it !

What to do poor Abraham didn't know ; for he scarcely dared to go to the owner with the ruined volume ; nor was he able to pay him for it. However, he finally made up his mind ; and forthwith he started off to Mr. Crawford, showed him the book, and then bravely offered to work for him until he was satisfied. The offer was accepted, but Mr. Crawford meanly took advantage of Abraham ; and for three whole days—and long ones too—the boy worked hard in his corn-field ; by the end of which time, however, he had earned the right to keep the damaged book. It was a noble, manly act ; and it is said that his honesty in thus making up for the mishap won him the esteem of all the settlers around when they heard of it.

Abraham had a very retentive memory, and frequently entertained those about him with long passages from such books as he had read ; or, if he had an opportunity of attending any religious or political meeting, he would, on his return, mount the stump of

a tree, and recount what he had heard. Sometimes he would do this in the harvest-field ; and, as a foreshadowing of the career which was eventually to be his, it is said that "his taste for public speaking seemed to be natural and irresistible." Even at this early age, too, the love of telling anecdotes and stories while giving any address was very marked in him ; and his good temper and ready wit made him beloved by every one.

Dennis Hanks, who, as already mentioned, was Lincoln's constant companion, and who in after years was fond of identifying himself with the early doings of his friend, describes his life at this time as follows : "We learned by sight, scent, and hearing. We heard all that was said, and talked over and over the questions heard ; wore them slick, greasy, and threadbare. Went to political and other gatherings, as you do now ; we would hear all sides and opinions, talk them over, discuss them, agreeing and disagreeing. . . . Abe preached, made speeches, read for us, explained to us, and so on. . . . He was a cheerful boy, a witty boy ; was humorous always ; sometimes would get sad, not very often. . . . In Gentryville, about one mile west of his father's farm, Abe would go and tell his jokes and stories, and was so odd, original, and humorous, and witty, that all the people in town would gather round him. He would keep them there till midnight ; I would get tired, and want to go home."

During the years of which I have been speaking, Abraham had been growing very rapidly; and when about sixteen years old he had almost reached the height he soon afterwards attained of six feet four inches. As he grew up, he had become exceedingly helpful in all the work of his father's farm—for Mr. Lincoln had now sufficiently cleared and cultivated some of his land to entitle it to be called by that name. Indeed, he had proved such a good labourer, and was so strong, that whenever his father could spare him he hired himself by the day to other settlers, taking home whatever he earned. Any of the neighbours who needed assistance were only too glad to secure Abraham, for he was ready to do any kind of work for them, "such as chopping wood, making a pie, or nursing a baby;" and he not only did each well, but made everybody around him merry while doing it.

It was at about this time—in the year 1825—that Abraham was hired by one James Taylor; and most varied was the work which he did for this employer, with whom he remained nine months, for the wages of six dollars (about 25s.) a month and his board. He was nominally engaged to manage a ferry-boat which plied across the Ohio River. But in addition to this, he was not only ploughman and hostler, but he ground the corn, laid the fires, put on the water in readiness for boiling, and cooked some of the food for the household.

At this period his bodily strength was very great,

for he could carry a load such as usually took three ordinary men to bear; "he could," said a friend, "sink an axe deeper into wood than any other man I ever knew;" and on one occasion he was observed to take up and carry away a big chicken-house of an unusually heavy weight. In those days drinking habits were only too prevalent, even among young people; but from childhood Abraham had always been exceedingly temperate, and remained so all his life.

While with Taylor, Lincoln was made very happy by the discovery of a few books—among them a history of the United States; and though he had to rise each morning very early, he would sit up and study evening after evening until very late—much to the annoyance of a son of Taylor, who shared his sleeping-place. It is said that one night the latter, after vainly begging his companion to put out the light and retire to rest, struck him. Abraham did not, however, lose his temper or take any notice, but went on with his reading; and in after years young Taylor used to speak in warm admiration of his forbearance towards him on this occasion.

On leaving Mr. Taylor, Abraham went home for a while; then he took service with a Mr. Jones, who had a store at Gentryville, which during this time had been gradually coming into existence as a village. Here, too, Abraham was fortunate in finding more books; besides which, as settlers were rapidly in-

creasing in the neighbourhood, he had opportunities of mixing with people somewhat better educated than those with whom he had been associated in early years. Jones's store being, too, the chief place at which the farmers and others purchased their necessities, he was ere long able to form a number of acquaintances.

Mr. Jones seems to have been very fond of Abraham, and, finding that he was a young man of unusual ability, not only encouraged him in his studies, but sometimes told him that he believed he would one day become a great man. He lent him books, among them the *Lives of Benjamin Franklin* and other worthies of America; he also took in a newspaper, and as he was much interested in political matters, he often talked about them with young Lincoln, thus inclining him to turn his thoughts towards the public affairs of his country.

Abraham, at this time, found another friend, who was of great help to him, in John Baldwin, the blacksmith, of Gentryville—a man who possessed a rich fund of stories, which he willingly related to young Lincoln. No doubt it was to this blacksmith that Abraham was indebted for not a few of the homely anecdotes and sayings with which, in after days, his speeches and conversation were so freely interspersed.

It was in the following year—1827—when Abraham was working with a man named Wood, a carpenter, that one of the earliest results of his self-education

was shown in the shape of an article on Temperance, and another on a political subject, which he succeeded in getting accepted and printed in Ohio newspapers ; and each is said to have been exceedingly able and well written.

Next we find him at home again, but beginning to be somewhat dissatisfied with the kind of life he had to live there. Mixing as he had done for some time past with his fellow-men, and learning from the books which he had read something more of the great world outside Indiana, he somewhat chafed under the humdrum life of his father's cabin, and the ordinary farmwork in which he had hitherto been engaged. And he began to have visions of what he might perhaps achieve if only he could penetrate beyond the narrow confines of his present existence.

And one of the earliest results of these yearnings took the form of a request to his father to allow him to build a flat boat—a peculiarly constructed craft used on the large rivers of America—and carry a few barrels of produce from the farm down the river and sell it at a market.

How his father received this bold proposal is not known ; the fact remains, however, that he eventually gave his consent, and that not only did Abraham build the boat, but made the voyage too. It was in connection with this undertaking that an incident occurred which is of considerable interest.

When the flat boat was completed, and Abraham

stood on the bank of the river admiring it, a steamer suddenly approached; and at the same time two passengers (having with them their luggage), who wanted to go on by the steamer, approached the spot where Abraham was standing. Then, looking at the different boats on the water, they singled out his, and asked him to row them to the steamer. Gladly enough Abraham took them on board his little craft, landed them on the steamer, and finally lifted up their trunks on board. What was better, just as he was shoving off, each of the passengers threw him a silver half-dollar; and not a little was he astonished, for he had not dreamed of receiving such good payment.

In after years, when he became President, Abraham Lincoln said, in speaking of this occurrence: "You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me a trifle; but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely believe that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day. I was a more hopeful and confident being from that hour."

This dollar was, in fact, the very first that Abraham considered he had earned for himself; for, hitherto, his father had claimed any wages received by him when he was hired.

Abraham having succeeded so well in making the voyage I have spoken of, was now asked—in March, 1828—by Mr. Gentry, who owned much of the property in Gentryville and from whom the

place obtained its name, if he would take charge of a flat boat laden with a quantity of bacon and other produce, and, accompanied by his own son, Allen Gentry, make a voyage to New Orleans for the purpose of selling the cargo. This was a somewhat dangerous and exciting trip of no fewer than eighteen hundred miles.

It says much for Mr. Gentry's faith in the capacity of Abraham that he should have been willing not only to entrust his boat, but also his son, to his care; for young Lincoln was to be responsible for the whole management of the trip. So it was, however; and before long the two young men started on their voyage.

As I have said, this was a perilous undertaking, and only men who were unusually strong and hardy could have entered upon it. The flat boat had to be propelled by hand, sometimes against contrary winds, the whole distance; while, apart from the dangers, there was the greatest discomfort for those who were on board. No snug cabin had such a craft; no fire; and there was only the rough blanket that was thrown over them to keep out the cold. Still, in spite of the drawbacks and difficulties and discomforts, the two plucky fellows accomplished their purpose; though they did not return to Mr. Gentry without meeting with some exciting adventures, one of which may be narrated.

After they had proceeded on their journey for some distance, they came to a sugar plantation ; and having, as was their custom, secured their boat for the night, they lay down to rest. Suddenly, however, they were awakened by footsteps on the deck, and, jumping up, they saw that several negroes were just in the act of creeping on board, evidently bent on robbery or murder.

They had been aroused only just in time. Rushing towards them, they knocked down the first one as he stepped on deck ; then they overpowered others that were following one by one, while the rest, who began to run off, were quickly chased and thrashed.

It was not, however, without being injured themselves, that Abraham and his companion thus got rid of the negroes ; Lincoln, indeed, received one wound, the scar of which remained throughout his life.

CHAPTER III.

"HONEST ABE."

ABRAHAM was just twenty-one years of age when his father determined to move into a new home. Mr. Lincoln had for some time felt a desire to move from the cabin where he had lived so long—among other reasons because the climate of Indiana was not very healthy ; so he resolved to go westward, to the State

of Illinois, where an uncle of Dennis', named John Hanks, was living.

He, therefore, sold his farm and stock of pigs and corn ; and in February, 1830, the Lincoln household, having packed their furniture, moved forth from the log cabin in a waggon drawn by four oxen, and in fifteen days they arrived at their destination, two hundred miles away.

Abraham, having now reached man's estate, would, had his family remained in Indiana, probably have gone out into the world, and have endeavoured to obtain employment and experience more congenial to his own taste and ambition. But, when he found his father desirous of moving to Illinois, he felt that he must at least assist him in getting to the new home, for he could not leave him at a time when he could be of so much service.

Accordingly he went, and immediately on arriving he helped to build a new dwelling-place. This was a much better and bigger one than that which the Lincolns had left in Indiana ; and though made of logs, it was comfortable in every way. In addition to the cabin, a smoke-house for drying meat, with a stable adjoining, was constructed, and after completing this, Abraham and John Hanks set to work to plough and enclose the fifteen acres of ground which Mr. Lincoln had secured.

With their oxen they ploughed the whole of the land within a week, and then put the corn in it ; and

afterwards Abraham and his uncle prepared rails, which were split by them from great logs, and roughly fenced the entire fifteen acres—no light task when we consider the area.

Abraham had always been noted for his proficiency in rail-splitting, his great strength enabling him to perform tasks which few other men could undertake. And you will find that two of the very rails which John Hanks and he fixed round Mr. Lincoln's new land in Illinois bore an important part in one of the many triumphal receptions with which in later years Abraham was greeted by his countrymen.

When young Lincoln had seen his father fairly settled in the new home, he for a time hired himself to some of the farmers in the neighbourhood, for he was reluctant to go far away from his parents so long as he felt they might need him.

One who knew him well speaks of Abraham as being at this period "the roughest looking man he ever knew." He was tall, angular, and ungainly, and wore trousers made of flax and tow, cut tightly at the ankles and loosely at the knees. He was very poor, but was welcome in every house in the neighbourhood. We are told that he would split rails in order to obtain clothing for his labour; and on one occasion, when he stood in need of some article of clothing, "he made a bargain with Mrs. Nancy Miller to split four hundred rails for every yard of jean, dyed with walnut bark, that would be required to make it."

Young Lincoln seems to have had few opportunities for reading just at this time ; but whenever he could get a book he would make the best use of it, and would often be seen reading when going to his work—to which he had sometimes to walk six or seven miles. He was, however, keeping up the old habit of acquiring day after day whatever fresh information he could ; and we may feel sure that, though for his father's and step-mother's sake he was staying near them, he was longing for the time when he could find a wider sphere for the realisation of his ambition than any of the farms in Illinois could afford.

It was when Abraham was hiring himself out at this period that one evening a well-dressed man rode up to the door of the farmhouse where he was at work, and, as was not unusual in sparsely populated districts in those days, he asked if he could have a night's lodging. The farmer replied that he could give the stranger some supper, and could take care of his horse, but he was afraid that he could not give him sleeping accommodation unless he were willing to share that of the hired hand. The man did not care to do this at first, but he consented to see what Abraham was like. So they went to look for him, and found him lying at full length on the ground deeply occupied with a book. "I reckon he'll do," said the stranger, as Abraham rose to speak to him ; so the sleeping-place was secured.

Abraham's wished-for opportunity of changing

his mode of occupation now came before long. It was not, however, until he had again assisted his parents in removing from their home in Illinois. This they found they had to leave at the end of the first year, owing to a serious epidemic which broke out around them ; so they resolved to remove to a healthier spot, and finally settled in a place in Coles County, Illinois—about sixty or seventy miles to the eastward—where they remained.

It was in the succeeding winter (1830-1) that an offer of employment was made to young Lincoln which we can well imagine he was delighted to receive. A trader named Offutt, at New Salem, Illinois, had proposed to his uncle, John Hanks—who was well known as a competent man in such undertakings—that he should go to New Orleans in charge of a boat and cargo, and the latter had consented, subject to Abraham agreeing to accompany him. A man named Johnson was also to go. With the recollection of his previous trip to the same place fresh in his memory, Abraham willingly accepted the offer, and, accompanied by Mr. Offutt, they started on their voyage, with a cargo consisting principally of pork and corn.

Only one incident of the trip itself need be mentioned. When the boat arrived at a difficult part of the river it stuck fast, and at first it was feared that it could hardly be floated again. However, as usual, Lincoln was equal to the occasion, and devised a

most ingenious piece of mechanism, by means of which the safety of the craft was ensured, and the navigators were enabled to proceed to New Orleans. Here the cargo was landed and sold, and Abraham, Offutt, and the others, returned home by steamer.

An event which, in the light of his later history, is of the utmost interest, occurred while Abraham was in New Orleans. For the first time in his life he saw a gang of negroes chained, whipped, and otherwise maltreated. The painful sight is said to have made such a deep impression on his mind, and to have so saddened him, that he never forgot it; and in after years, when he stood forward in his country as the champion of the oppressed blacks, he frequently said that it was this scene at New Orleans which first caused him to form the opinions he held as to the wickedness of Slavery.

It was on his return from this voyage that Mr. Offutt, appreciating the value of so useful a man as Abraham had proved himself to be, and needing some one competent to manage a "general store" which he was about to establish in New Salem, offered the charge of the latter to young Lincoln, who willingly accepted it.

In the meantime Abraham went to his father's home, and he had hardly arrived there when a famous wrestler, one Daniel Needham, paid him a visit. The latter had heard of young Lincoln's stature and strength, and as he looked upon himself as being the

"best man" in Illinois, the report of Abe's achievements filled him with envy. He had come, therefore, to challenge him—doing so in a very rough and peremptory manner; and the upshot was that, the two having met by appointment, Abraham threw him twice with the utmost ease. Needham's pride was much more wounded than his body, and turning to his antagonist, he said, "Lincoln, you may have thrown me twice, but at any rate you can't whip me!" On which the other replied, "Needham, are you satisfied that I can throw you? If you are not, and must be convinced through a thrashing, I will do that also for your sake." The wrestler had not bargained for such a retort; he had imagined that Lincoln would at least have hesitated to fight him; but when he discovered that he was not only willing to do so, but to thrash him for his own good, he gave in, and the matter ended in his unconditional surrender.

On proceeding to New Salem soon afterwards, young Lincoln did not enter upon his new duties immediately, for the merchandise with which Mr. Offutt was to furnish the store had not arrived; and while waiting for this Abe accepted a temporary engagement during an election which was being held. A clerk was wanted at the polling-place, and it was rather difficult in such a region to find one, for only a few of the people in the settlement could read and write well; so Abraham was appealed to, and on being asked if he thought he could fill the post, he replied, "Yes,

I'll do the best I can ;" and it need not be said that he performed all that was required of him most satisfactorily.

In due course Mr. Offutt's goods, consisting of almost every commodity needed by the settlers of the neighbourhood, arrived ; and forthwith Abraham was installed in the store now started, of which he became the manager or salesman. This was in August, 1831.

As we have already seen, he had always been a favourite. In his new occupation he made himself more liked than ever ; and the consequence was that under his direction the store soon became, and continued for a time to be, a much-frequented resort of those living in and around New Salem.

People liked to come there to make purchases, and have a chat with such a pleasant, intelligent man as Abraham ; they were fond of hearing him talk on the many subjects to which he had devoted his thoughts ; and, above all, they admired the straightforwardness, the integrity, the truthfulness, and the sterling qualities which he displayed in his every action. Not a few incidents are related which prove how determined Abraham was that even in the smallest details his business should be conducted with strictest fairness and honesty.

On one occasion a woman entered the store to buy some goods, and the amount of her bill was two dollars and six cents. Later on in the day Abraham,

in checking his accounts, found that he had overcharged her six cents. So at night, after he had finished his duties in the store, he walked to the woman's house, a distance of between two and three miles, to put the matter right by returning to her the money she had overpaid.

At another time a woman came in just before he was closing the store for the day, and bought half a pound of tea. When he began business on the next morning he saw that by some means the weight on the scales was only a quarter of a pound ; so that he had unwittingly cheated his customer of half her order. Thereupon he weighed out another quarter of a pound of tea, closed up the store again, and took it to her before beginning the day.

One morning a big, rough-looking man pushed his way in while Abraham was attending to some female customers, and began to use coarse language, and adopt a hectoring tone to those present. Abraham civilly requested him to behave properly, on which he replied that he was not afraid of any one, and that, further, he would thrash him if he said any more. Lincoln waited until his customers had gone ; then, as the bully dared him to touch him, he jumped over the counter, turned him out of the shop, and at length made him beg for mercy. Whereupon, we are told, Abraham at once lifted him up, and, taking him into the store, washed his face and made him

comfortable. Ever afterwards the two remained the greatest friends.

This was not the only encounter which Lincoln had with men who, envious of his popularity and abilities, tried to annoy and injure him. When he arrived in New Salem, he found the place infested by a gang of ruffians, calling themselves the "Clary Grove Boys;" and it was the custom of these cowards not merely to play rough, brutal jokes on any man new to the neighbourhood, but often, by insulting and cuffing him, to entice him to fight. Having done this, numbers of them would attack him, and thus he received a terrible beating at their hands.

For some reason—one being, probably, because a man of the height of six feet four inches might prove a tough match for them—the "Clary Grove Boys" had at first hesitated before they introduced themselves and their customs to Abraham. After a while, however, they seem to have considered that their own notoriety as bullies would suffer unless they challenged him; so they made up their minds to wait no longer, and forthwith commenced to provoke him according to their usual wont.

At first Abraham, conscious of his own strength, was very forbearing, and tried to parley with them, in the hope of settling affairs without using force. One of the leaders of the "Boys," however, insisted on putting the matter to the test; and the result was that Abraham—who astonished them by holding out

the blackguard by the throat at arm's length—convinced them that for once they had attempted too much. From that day forward the reign of terror which the "Clary Grove Boys" had established began to be on the wane. Assisted by others belonging to New Salem, Abraham forthwith took steps to put down the ruffians; and before long, much to the relief of the inhabitants, the gang was effectually broken up, many of its members even becoming friends of Abraham.

While at Mr. Offutt's store, Abraham still devoted all the hours he could spare after business was done to study; and it was during the time he was here that he thought himself very fortunate in learning one day that at a place seven or eight miles away there was an English grammar. Forthwith he walked off to the person who possessed the precious book, and, having borrowed it, before long thoroughly mastered it from beginning to end.

There is ample evidence that at this time Lincoln began to feel that he had before him a great future, and that it was necessary for him to fit himself for it in every way possible. Just as in years previously he had been in the habit of asking questions of his mother and others concerning any subject which he did not fully understand, so now he left no stone unturned to seek knowledge from whomsoever he could obtain it. A Mr. Green, a lawyer, relates, for instance, that when he visited New Salem, Lincoln

would frequently ask him to explain some difficult point in grammar which puzzled him ; and we find, too, that Abraham regularly attended debating societies, and took part in their various discussions. He also read a newspaper regularly, for which he never failed to pay, though he had not always the means to buy good clothing. Indeed, by patience and perseverance, he strove to fit himself in every way he could for the career upon which he was so soon to enter.

At this period it was that Abraham Lincoln, by upright conduct in all his dealings, earned the name of "Honest Abe," which he ever afterwards bore. And, as showing the varied manner in which he now associated himself with the people around him, and how his services in almost any capacity were in general request, we are told that "he was judge, arbitrator, referee, umpire, authority in all disputes, games, and matches ; a pacificator in all quarrels ; everybody's friend ; the best-natured, most sensible, the best-informed, the most modest and unassuming, the kindest, gentlest, roughest, strongest, and best young fellow in all New Salem and the region round about."

After Lincoln had been for some months in New Salem, a tide of misfortune overtook Mr. Offutt. He seems to have embarked in certain commercial ventures which, one after another, proved to be very unsuccessful, and the consequence was that in the

spring of 1832 he was obliged to close his store. Abraham suddenly found himself, therefore, out of employment, and he was for a while uncertain what he should do for a means of livelihood.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAWN OF FAME.

IT was at the crisis referred to above that a new and unexpected opening for Lincoln's services presented itself.

About thirty years previously, a tribe of Indians, called the Sacs, who had proved very troublesome through their inroads on the white men's property, had agreed, under pressure of force, to move to the western side of the river Mississippi, and there they had quietly remained for some years. But latterly, their chief, Black Hawk, had begun to feel that his people had not been justly treated in being compelled to leave the old hunting-grounds of their ancestors; and he had gone so far as to threaten to return, and endeavour to recover possession of them. And that these were not empty threats was proved; for, aided by other tribes, Black Hawk and his followers had already sallied forth from their settlement, much to the consternation of the white people.

Military action was now necessary; and the

Governor of the State of Illinois called for volunteers. Several regiments were immediately formed, and among them one of which men from New Salem formed a portion.

Had Lincoln been in full employment, doubtless he would have still wished to offer his services; but this call to arms being made at the very time when he had just left Mr. Offutt's service, and having no fresh occupation in view, he was doubly anxious to take part in the expedition against Black Hawk.

Accordingly he enlisted. What was more—and it well proves his popularity and good repute among his fellows—when the choice of leader came to be made by his regiment, he was chosen captain.

In electing him, a curious method was adopted. Two candidates were nominated, who took their places at a little distance from each other; then the men of the regiment walked up, and stood by the side of whoever they voted for. Immediately, one after another marched to the side of Abraham, until a large majority had thus voted for him. Most of the minority then left his opponent, making his election almost unanimous. In after years, Lincoln used to say that no subsequent success in his whole career gave him so much pleasure as this choice of him as their captain by his fellow-volunteers.

Abraham had served about three months in the Black Hawk war, when it was brought to an end; but during the whole time he and his men were not

called upon to take part in actual fighting. They had, however, much privation to endure, and Lincoln, though he was much liked by those with him, had not a few difficulties to contend with while in command of the regiment, which, but for his tact and common sense, he would not have been able to overcome.

During one of the marches of his regiment, a poor Indian—described as having been “solitary, weary, and hungry”—found his way into the camp. He was of course at once looked upon as a spy, and though he had thrown himself upon the mercy of the soldiers, and even produced a letter from the American general stating that his character was good, they would not listen to him. They pronounced the document, which was really a safe-conduct pass for the man, to be forged; and after a little while it was seriously proposed that he should be shot without ceremony.

At this point “Captain” Lincoln, as he was called, came to the rescue, and, placing himself between his men and the Indian, said, “This must not be done. He must not be shot or killed by us.” And so determined was their leader’s attitude that the men, thoroughly cowed, at once desisted from their purpose, and the poor Indian was saved.

Of his military services in this campaign, Lincoln, when he became President, once said, jokingly, “If General Cass (the commander) went in advance of me in picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in

charges on the wild onions! If he saw any live fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many struggles with the mosquitoes; and, although I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry."

On his return from the Black Hawk war, Abraham Lincoln, who made his way back partly on foot and partly on a raft down the Illinois River, was heartily welcomed by the people of New Salem; and while he was once more thinking what he should do to earn a livelihood, a fresh surprise was in store for him. For he had hardly arrived back in the town before he was told that a certain section of the people were desirous that he should be a candidate for the State Legislature of Illinois—the election for which was to take place very shortly.

At first Lincoln probably thought that his good friends were jesting, for he could scarcely realise that such an honour could yet be his; but it was so. And when he was pressed to give his consent to stand as a candidate he willingly agreed, feeling not a little gratified at being asked.

Lincoln made his first political speech—delivered at a place called Pappsville—at this time. A public sale had been held in that town one day, and Lincoln, who was about to canvass the district, took advantage of this circumstance to address the people assembled at it. An amusing scene occurred just previously to his speaking. After the sale had been brought to an

end, there was a kind of general fight among some of the people present ; and Lincoln, "noticing that a friend of his was being badly treated, stepped into the crowd, and shouldered them away from his man, until he met with one who refused to go. Him he seized by the nape of his neck and his legs, and tossed him ten or twelve feet easily." After this incident he mounted the platform, and delivered the following speech :—

"Gentlemen and Fellow-citizens,—I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favour of a national bank. I am in favour of the internal-improvement system, and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful ; if not, it will be all the same."

The candidature of Lincoln eventually proved to be unsuccessful, though it was the only time in his life that he was really beaten when appealing to the people for their support ; but during the election he won golden opinions from both friends and opponents ; and it is said that "if he had chosen to be less scrupulous in maintaining his political principles, he would not have lost the day."

The next step taken by him was to enter into partnership with a man named Berry, and carry on

another "general store" in New Salem. This undertaking, however, not only proved a failure, but owing to his having been misled by Berry, who finally absconded, he had to bear the burden of all the debts of the store. These of course he was quite unable to meet at the time ; indeed, it was not until the year 1840 that he cleared off all the sums for which he had become responsible ; and the fact that thenceforth he contrived to pay little by little until he had quite liquidated them is another illustration of his high principles and unswerving honesty.

He next found employment in a store belonging to a Mr. Ellis, and with what he earned here and the assistance he received from friends in New Salem, he managed to live. At this period, he was evidently in sore straits ; and it is the more creditable to him that, amid such unfavourable circumstances, he should have kept heart, and persevered in cultivating his mind. This he was now doing ; and, in no way discouraged by his failure in business, he devoted himself as steadily as ever to self-improvement in every way he could.

Fortunately, he had opportunities now for borrowing some excellent books—among them, Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Shakespeare, and others ; and these he studied assiduously. The manner in which he succeeded in making himself thoroughly acquainted with such volumes as he secured was one worthy of imitation. It was, we

are told, his custom to write out an epitome of every book he read, a process which served to impress the contents indelibly on his mind, as well as to give him skill in composition. He also read every newspaper which he could procure, and thus kept himself well posted in all the public affairs—political and otherwise—of the day.

A kind friend—Mr. John Calhoun, the surveyor of Sangamon County—who had recognised Lincoln's unusual abilities, came forward about this time ; and knowing of his financial difficulties, and thinking him fitted to do better and more remunerative work than he had been hitherto engaged in, offered to make him one of his assistants as soon as he had qualified himself for the position. This offer, it need not be said, Lincoln was overjoyed to receive ; nor had he any misgivings as to the qualification for the situation, feeling that he could soon acquire that.

He forthwith set to work to prepare himself for the new profession, and in six weeks' time, after close study of books, lent by Mr. Calhoun, and by the aid of practical instruction also given by that gentleman, he was able to enter upon his duties.

Lincoln now commenced to assist Mr. Calhoun ; he was allowed also to have a private surveying practice of his own ; and ere long he had succeeded so well as to have many important duties entrusted to him, all of which he discharged with care and accuracy. Still, his income was not large, though, as

he himself afterwards said, "it procured him bread, and kept body and soul together."

It was while he was thus carrying on his profession as a surveyor that—in 1833—the appointment of postmaster of New Salem was offered to and accepted by him. The duties of this office, carried on at a store, were by no means onerous, the mail arriving only once a week, and the number of letters and newspapers then received not being great. But, as one of his biographers remarks, Lincoln "determined that the dignity of the office should not suffer while he was the incumbent. He, therefore, made up for the lack of real business by deciphering the letters of the uneducated portion of the community, and by reading the newspapers aloud to the assembled inhabitants in front of the store."

It was characteristic of him that he should in such a way extend to his less fortunate fellow-townsmen some of the advantages which his self-education enabled him to enjoy himself; and it was by such acts, and by his amiability and goodness of heart generally, that he daily grew in the estimation of those around him. Mr. Offutt, his old master, had the highest opinion of his capabilities, and was frequently heard to say that "Lincoln knows more than any other man in the United States;" while the Governor of Indiana, who had become acquainted with him, "was astonished at the extent of his information, and

declared that the young man had talent enough for a President of the country."

As showing the thoughtfulness for others who needed help which ever distinguished Lincoln, not a few anecdotes are told of his life in New Salem.

One bitterly cold day he happened to see a man named Ab Trent working very hard at chopping wood. The poor fellow was barefooted and shivering most pitifully. Lincoln watched him for a few minutes, and on inquiring what he was to receive for the job was told that it would be a dollar ; the man adding, as he looked down at his suffering feet, that he hoped to buy a pair of shoes with the money. Thereupon Lincoln, taking in his own hands the man's axe, bade him go and warm himself at the nearest fire ; upon which he chopped up all the wood so fast that both the owner of it and poor Ab were amazed when they saw it finished.

In the following year—1834—another election of members of the State Legislature took place ; and Lincoln, having been called upon to stand as a candidate for Sangamon County, was this time successful, having been elected by a large majority. There were now two political parties, the Democrats and the Whigs, and Lincoln belonged to the latter.

During his canvass for this election, Lincoln happened once to be staying with a friend, a wealthy farmer, who resided in the contested district. One day after dinner he was taken out into the harvest-field in

order to make the acquaintance of the labourers, numbering about thirty, and to solicit their votes. After Lincoln had spoken to them, one of the men came forward and said that the candidate they should vote for must be one able to hold his own as a field labourer. Thereupon, to their amusement, Lincoln set to, and soon proved that, even in their own harvesting work, he was fully as capable as they ; and every one of the thirty men voted for him.

On another day during the same canvass, when he was on his way to a certain place at which he was to speak, some one, seeing him pass by, asked who he was. On being informed, the questioner, looking at Lincoln's rough attire, and tall, ungainly figure, said, laughingly, "What ! can't our party raise any better material than that?" to which the reply was made, "Go and hear him speak before you pronounce any judgment upon him." So the gentleman who had put the question went, and when he came back he was asked whether his opinion had altered, "Why, sir," he replied, "he is a perfect take-in ; he knows more than all the other candidates put together !"

Up to the time of his election, Lincoln had always dressed in a very homely style, because his means were limited, and whatever he could spare he devoted to the payment of the debts to which I have alluded. But, when he knew that he had to sit in the Legislature, he felt that he must improve his personal appearance. He, therefore, borrowed of a

friend, Colonel Smoot, two hundred dollars—afterwards faithfully repaid—which enabled him to purchase good clothing and other necessities ; so he was able to take his place along with the other statesmen of Illinois properly attired.

Lincoln was now fairly climbing the ladder, and his entry into the Illinois Legislature marks an important epoch in his life.

He is said to have spoken little during his first session, choosing rather to learn by observation all he could of legislative work ; but he was by no means idle now ; and “he created such a good impression on all with whom he came into contact that everything seemed to promise well for his future.”

At the close of the session in the State House—then situated in Vandalia, the capital, one hundred miles from New Salem—Lincoln returned to the latter place, and on arriving it was soon evident that he had in view an important plan connected with himself, which had been formed by him during his absence. This was a resolve to fit himself for the profession of the law.

Certain of Lincoln's biographers state that he had some time before this given his attention to the study of legal matters ; but, whether he had done so or not, it is clear that he had been led to actually decide on the step now about to be taken through having recently become acquainted with a kind and clever lawyer, Mr. John T. Stuart, of Springfield.

This gentleman was a member of the State Legislature, where Lincoln had met him, and it was during the session just ended that, having been struck by the young surveyor's abilities and intelligence, he had not only advised him to study for the law, but had most generously offered to help him in any way he could.

Lincoln's friends in New Salem were delighted to hear of his resolve, and they were doubtless more and more proud of the man, who was already everybody's favourite. So, losing no time, he worked very hard at his new pursuit; and it is a good proof of what he was prepared to undergo in achieving his purpose, when we learn that his first step, after returning to New Salem, was to walk to Springfield, twenty-two miles away, in order to borrow four volumes of Blackstone's "Commentaries," which Mr. Stuart had offered to lend him. And it was not once only that he made this journey, but again and again he went to Springfield for other law books when he needed them.

Thus—with most of the day devoted to his surveying duties, and many hours of the night to the eager study of law, of politics, and of other subjects—the months flew by until 1837, when, having in the meantime been re-elected to the Legislature, attended to his duties there, and become quite a notable man in Illinois, Lincoln obtained his licence as an attorney. Then it was—in the April of that

year—that he entered into partnership with Mr. Stuart at Springfield.

The latter-named place was now—mainly, it is said, through Lincoln's exertions—made the capital of the State instead of Vandalia, and Abraham was thus able to have his home, as well as to carry on his profession, in the same town in which he was engaged in his legislative duties.

It was about this time—at the beginning of the year 1837—and during the second term of his attendance at the State House that Lincoln, whose kind heart ever beat with tenderest pity for all who suffered, put on record his first protest against the system of Slavery existing in the Southern States of America.* There was at this time a growing agitation in different parts of the country against this traffic in negroes, but so strong and influential was the party who were interested in, and therefore favourable to, its continuance, that some of their representatives in the Legislatures of various States had even gone so far as to get resolutions passed recommending that the agitators against

* In the year 1820, at about which period there had been considerable division of opinion in the United States as to the institution of Slavery, and much opposition to its further extension, an agreement was come to by the contending parties; and a law—generally known as the Missouri Compromise—was passed, by which Slavery was in future to be permitted in any portion of the Union south of 36° 30' latitude, but absolutely prohibited to the north of that line. In other words, Slavery was legalised in the Southern half of the Union, while the Northern half was to be free.

Slavery should be treated as offenders against the law. Such recommendations had not, however, been adopted ; though the Slave Party had succeeded in inducing the Legislature at Washington to decide that all petitions which might be presented by the Abolitionists should be totally ignored.

It was when the Legislature of Illinois passed a series of resolutions in favour of Slavery that Lincoln formally protested against them ; and the fact that out of all the Members there he could find only one man, named Dan Stone—also a representative of Sangamon County—to support him in the course he took, well illustrates the state of feeling in regard to Slavery which prevailed at this period. It shows us, too, the courage of Lincoln in thus expressing and maintaining his opinions in face of such a majority as there was against him.

But the presenting of this protest to his fellow legislators, though only a small beginning, was no trivial incident ; for it was, ere long, to blossom into that fearless opposition to the Slave Party, and that dogged determination to prevent the extension of their trade, which eventually led to the Emancipation of the Negro.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAWYER OF SPRINGFIELD.

TO rise in life every one has need of facilities for displaying whatever gifts he possesses ; but the Providence that bestows the talents does not withhold the means for utilising them. The opportunity may not always come as quickly as we want it ; but come it does, and if it be but embraced, there need be little fear as to the result. It is by letting it pass by — never, perhaps, to return — that the goal is missed.

That Abraham Lincoln felt this there can be no doubt ; indeed, ample proof that he did is given by the perseverance with which, when he found himself enabled to do so, he qualified himself for the law ; by the readiness with which he accepted Mr. Stuart's offer of a partnership ; and still more by the enthusiastic manner in which he now began to devote himself to his profession in Springfield.

In inviting him to become his partner, Mr. Stuart, who possessed a large practice, had performed a great act of kindness to Lincoln, and it was no mean tribute to the young man's abilities that such an offer should have been made to him.

But Mr. Stuart, from all that he had observed of Lincoln during his attendance at the State House

and in other ways, well knew that in him he had found no ordinary man, but one who would make his mark; he was only too glad, therefore, to be associated with him. Thus he was able to serve himself as well as Lincoln.

Lincoln was now again elected to the Illinois Legislature, and continued for eight years to attend the sittings, during which time he more and more distinguished himself as a politician, and became recognised by his own party as their leader in the House. His speeches at this time are described as having been "strong in argument, clear in statement, striking, and often beautiful in illustration. His pleasantry and keen wit fixed the attention of the most indifferent."

As the State House was now in Springfield, he was able, as I have said, to attend there as well as to follow his profession without difficulty; and while the one pursuit formed a ladder by which he could ascend to political eminence, the other provided the means of gaining an honourable livelihood.

As a lawyer, Lincoln soon made rapid strides; and ere long he came to be regarded as one of the most prominent citizens of Springfield. His partnership with Mr. Stuart lasted till 1840; after which he joined Judge Logan, with whom he remained till he entered into partnership with Mr. W. H. Herndon.

Lincoln's high principles, and his strict honesty in whatever he associated himself with, were now often

put to severe test by clients who sought his services ; but he was ever proof against all temptation. He always refused to accept any case which was in the least degree unjust, or which could be won only by taking some advantage of the opposite side ; nor would he press any point in favour of a client unless he felt that he could conscientiously do so. What he delighted in most of all was to take the side of those whom he felt to have been wronged or oppressed. For such clients he would zealously exert all his powers—sometimes without any fee.

Not a few anecdotes are told of Lincoln as a lawyer, some of which are of much interest.

Once, while sitting in his office, a visitor was announced, who said that he had a case in which he wished Lincoln to act for him. After he had stated all the facts about it, Lincoln rose to his feet, and said, " Yes, there is no doubt whatever that I can win your case for you. I can set a whole neighbourhood at loggerheads ; I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children, and thereby get for you six hundred dollars, which might fully belong, it seems to me, as much to the woman and her children as to you. You must remember that some things are legally right which are not morally right. I shall not take your case, but I will give you a little advice, for which I will not charge you anything : I advise you to try your hand in making six hundred dollars in some other way ! "

While engaged with another attorney in a case in which the client was accused of murder, it came to Lincoln's knowledge that the accused was really guilty, and he at once declined to proceed with the defence. His fellow-lawyer, however, less scrupulous, went on with it, and secured an acquittal. The fee received was nine hundred dollars, but though one half of this was tendered to Lincoln, he refused to accept any portion of it.

A poor negro woman called on him one day, and told him a pitiful tale of how her son—on whom she had depended for support—had recently gone on a steamer to New Orleans, and as soon as he had landed had been imprisoned; for there was then a law in operation, by which poor blacks from certain States could be seized, and, unless redeemed, sent back to slavery. Lincoln did what he could to obtain the release of the man by appealing to the Governor of the State; but as this was without avail, he and his partner generously made up the sum needed, and bought the negro's liberty.

As another illustration of his strict honesty in every action, it is related that it was his custom whenever he took a fee in the absence of his partner to put one half of it in his pocket, and the other to carefully fold up and label "Billy"—his favourite name for Mr. Herndon. When asked why he did not make a note of the amount, and in the meantime use the whole of it, he replied, "Because I promised

my mother never to use money belonging to another person."

While engaged in a closely contested civil action, Lincoln was able to show to the court that a certain amount, claimed by his client, was really due to him. He was not then aware that the latter was a somewhat slippery fellow, and that he had been misled by him. The opposing lawyer, however, produced a receipt, which conclusively showed that the sum alleged to be owing had really been already paid. Immediately afterwards Lincoln disappeared from the court, and when the judge sent for him, he declined to return, and said, "Tell the judge I can't come. My hands are dirty, and I came here to wash them!"

A man named Cogdal, having become embarrassed in business, employed Lincoln to attend to the settlement of his affairs, and gave him a note for the amount of his fee. Not long afterwards he met with a serious accident, through an explosion, which caused him to lose the use of his hand. Lincoln, meeting him one day, inquired how he was, and the man replied that he was getting on well, but was troubling about the amount of the fee for which he was indebted to him. Lincoln at once took Cogdal's note from his pocket, and, bidding him to think no more of it, pushed it into his hand, and would not listen to a word of remonstrance or an expression of gratitude.

A widow of a military officer came to him one day, and showed him that she had been defrauded of

one hundred dollars. Lincoln at once took up the case without making any charge, and in the end was the means of causing the dishonest man to return the money.

It was while practising in Springfield—though some years after he had first settled there—that he was engaged in a case in which he much distinguished himself. A dreadful murder having been perpetrated, a young fellow named Armstrong, the son of an aged couple for whom Lincoln had worked many years before, was charged with the crime. After being arrested and examined, a true bill was found against him, and he was lodged in gaol to await his trial. As soon as Lincoln heard of the affair, he at once sent a kind letter to Mrs. Armstrong, saying how sorry he was to hear of her son's trouble, and after stating that he was anxious the young man should have a fair trial, he offered, as a return for her goodness to him while he had been in adverse circumstances, to give his services gratuitously. These, it need not be said, were only too willingly accepted.

Having investigated the case, Lincoln discovered that Armstrong was the victim of a conspiracy, and, finding that there was much public feeling about it, he determined to use all his efforts to have the trial postponed until the excitement had somewhat subsided.

The trial day, however, came at last, and the chief witness testified positively that he saw Armstrong

plunge the knife into the heart of the murdered man. He also said that he remembered all the circumstances perfectly : that the crime was committed at half-past nine at night, and that the moon was shining brightly at the time. Lincoln reviewed all the testimony carefully ; then—reserving his great point till the last—he called for an official almanack ; and, turning to the day referred to, he proved that the moon which the witness had declared was shining brightly at half-past nine did not even rise until an hour and a half after that time ! He was able also to expose other flaws in the prosecuting evidence ; and within half an hour after the jury had retired, they came back into court with a verdict of “Not guilty.”

It is said that the prisoner and his mother had been awaiting the result of the trial with agonising anxiety, and that no sooner had the momentous words “Not guilty” dropped from the foreman’s lips than Mrs. Armstrong swooned. Then her son rushed across the room, and grasped the hand of his deliverer, whilst his heart was too full for utterance. One who was present says, “I confess that *my* cheeks were not wholly unwet with tears as I turned from the affecting scene. As I cast a glance behind, I saw Abraham Lincoln obeying the Divine injunction by comforting the widowed and fatherless.”

It was customary at this period for lawyers to “ride the circuit,” as it was called ; that is, they travelled from place to place throughout their own

State to attend local courts of law, and to transact various kinds of professional business.

At first, Lincoln was too poor to own a horse for this purpose, and had to borrow ; but after a while he became the possessor of one, which he is said to have fed and groomed himself. On this horse he would sometimes start off from Springfield, "with no baggage but a pair of saddle-bags, containing a change of linen, and an old cotton umbrella to shelter him from sun or rain ;" and he would be absent for as long as three months together.

He still retained his old love of study, and it was on these circuit journeys that he would, as he rode along, or at odd moments in the places where he was staying, seize every opportunity that offered for reading, or in other ways for fitting himself still more for the performance of those duties in life which were every year increasing in importance and responsibility.

As an example of his perseverance in small matters, Lincoln used in later life to relate that, soon after going to Springfield, having frequently, in the course of his law-reading, come upon the word "demonstrate," he resolved to understand its real meaning thoroughly. So he set to work to do so, and did not leave off "till he could give any proposition in the first six books of Euclid at sight."

Now and then, on his circuit journeys, he was accompanied by a friend ; and on one occasion, when going along, and finding himself hardly able to

proceed because of the mud which had accumulated in the road, he saw a pig which was literally stuck fast in the "slough." Lincoln's companion had, on witnessing the poor creature's pitiful condition as they passed by, commented on it, and then driven on; but, after about another half mile had been laboriously gone over, Lincoln suddenly exclaimed—"I don't know how you feel about it, but I'll have to go back and pull that pig out of the slough." His comrade laughed, thinking it merely a joke; but what was his surprise when Lincoln dismounted, left him to his reflections, and, striding slowly back, grappled with the drowning pig, dragged him out of the ditch, left him on its edge to recover his strength, and the two men drove on as if nothing had happened.

Some of the old habits which, as a boy, he had learned in the Indiana forest still clung to him even yet, and among these was his fondness for cutting wood. On his journeys round the circuit, it is recorded that sometimes, when he encountered a roadside wood-cutter, he would get off his horse, ask for the axe, and having placed himself on the log in proper fashion, would, with his long arms, cut it in two before the man could recover from his surprise.

And thus it is easy to understand how during his residence in Springfield, and in the course of his visits to various places in the State of Illinois, Abraham Lincoln rapidly rose to distinction in his profession,

and also, as he had ever done, endeared himself to every one who knew him.

During all this time Lincoln had by no means forgotten his father and step-mother. He had remitted money to them regularly, as well as taken care that their every want was supplied ; and it was with one of the first fees earned by him as a lawyer that he had purchased a piece of land and settled it on Mrs. Lincoln. He had been engaged in a criminal case of some importance, and having won the day he was paid the sum of five hundred dollars. When he received this, he remarked to a friend that if he could only add to this sum two hundred and fifty dollars, he would buy a "quarter-section" (160 acres) of land, and present it to his step-mother. The friend agreed to lend the needed amount, but asked why he did not settle the land on her merely for her lifetime, but Lincoln would not hear of such a proposition. Said he, "I shall do nothing of the kind. It's a poor return at the best for all the good woman's devotion and fidelity to me, and there isn't going to be any half-way work about it."

In the month of November, 1842, Abraham Lincoln married Miss Mary Todd, daughter of the Hon. Robert S. Todd, of Lexington, Kentucky ; and it was probably in his home in Springfield, during the next few years, he spent some of his happiest days. But these were of brief duration. For important affairs of State ere long claimed his anxious

attention and undivided thought—affairs which must often not only have tried him sorely, but sometimes made him feel that the burden they cast upon him was almost too heavy to bear.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

IN the preceding chapter I spoke more particularly of Lincoln's doings as a successful lawyer, though, as we saw, he had still continued to perform his legislative duties.

After being a Member for Sangamon County for eight years, however, he had begun to have higher ambition; and in the year 1846—having now ceased to attend the sittings of the Illinois State House—he received a greater honour than had yet been conferred upon him by being elected a Member of the United States Congress.*

* Congress is the term applied to the Representatives of the people, who form the Legislature of the United States. Congress comprises two Houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate consists of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, and elected for a period of six years. One-third of the Senators are elected every two years. The House of Representatives consists of one or more Members from each State—the number varying in proportion to the population—elected by all male citizens over twenty-one years of age. They sit for two years only. The Senator must have attained the age of thirty, and the Representative the age of twenty-five. Both Senators and Representatives are paid five thousand dollars annually, with travelling expenses.

Two years before—in 1844—Lincoln, who was a warm admirer of Henry Clay, a prominent statesman and then a candidate for the American Presidency, had canvassed, or “stumped,” Illinois, in furtherance of his cause. He had made speeches nearly every day for some time on the various national subjects uppermost at the moment, particularly against the extension of the Slave trade, to which Clay had been ever opposed ; and it was at this time that he met in debate Mr. Stephen A. Douglas, who had been for some years a fellow Member of the Illinois Legislature, and who was shortly to become—for a long period, but not for ever—his most powerful political enemy. Douglas—a man of great ability and of commanding influence with his own party—was not only working against those who were opposed to Slavery, but was even in favour of having the law altered so that the institution might be still further extended.

Mr. Clay was, to Lincoln’s disappointment, unsuccessful in his candidature ; but, as it proved, the result was all the better for Lincoln himself. For so popular had he become during his journeyings through the State on behalf of Clay, that when, in 1846, an election for Congress was to take place, he was brought forward as a candidate, and elected by a large majority. On the 6th of December he took his seat in the House of Representatives at Washington. Mr. Douglas was now returned as a Senator from Illinois, and it is a curious coincidence that

Lincoln was the tallest man in the Legislature and Douglas the smallest.

Not merely was his election another step upward, but it was the forerunner of others that were destined to affect the whole future of the United States. A war was at this period being carried on with Mexico, the latter country having resisted the invasion by the American army of Texas, a State which the former claimed as a portion of its own dominions. In what was really his first important speech in Congress, Lincoln denounced this war. He and his party were doubly opposed to it; first, because they could not countenance such annexation of territory, and next—a stronger reason still—because they knew full well that the main object of adding Texas to the Union was that the powerful slave-owners of the South—at whose instigation mainly the campaign had been undertaken—might use it for the furtherance of Slavery.

In the speech referred to, Lincoln, by the force of his arguments, and the earnestness of his protests, dealt the Slave Party a severe blow; and it was through the determined attitude assumed by him and by those associated with him in the cause of Liberty that the compromise eventually made—which allowed only a portion of Texas to become slave territory—was effected.

Nor was it merely in connection with Texas that the Slave Party had been opposed by Lincoln. So

powerful had the latter become, and so resolved on the extension of their trade, that they had endeavoured, though their Representatives in Congress, to extend it to the Territories* of the West—which as new States, were now being added to the Union—where it was not legalised; and these attempts, too, were opposed by him, with the result that a compromise was arrived at by which the slave-owners' ends were only partially gained.

One feature of this temporary settlement of the question was a concession to the Slave party in the form of a measure which made it illegal to harbour slaves who had escaped to Free States, and caused the return of them to their owners to be compulsory. That this Bill was the cause of much suffering and hardship is unquestionable, and Mr. Charles G. Leland, the well-known American writer, in speaking of it says, "While great pains were taken to hunt down and return slaves who had escaped to Free States, there was literally nothing done to return free coloured people who had been inveigled and carried by force to the South and there sold as slaves. It is believed that at one time hardly a day passed during which a free black was not thus entrapped from Pennsylvania." Mr. Leland adds that he "once knew a boy of purely white blood, but of dark complexion,

* A term used in the United States to signify large districts of the country not forming portions of any individual States, and not yet admitted into the Union, but having temporary governments appointed by the President and Congress.

who narrowly escaped being kidnapped by downright violence that he might be 'sent South.'"

In spite, however, of the fact that these compromises threatened, to some extent, to defeat their purpose, it was more than ever evident that the Slave party were by no means discouraged, and that they were bent on asserting, for their own ends, the strength which, year by year, they had been gathering; for though there was a lull in the storm for the moment, yet events soon proved that the slaveowners of the South, and the opponents of Slavery in the North, were on the eve of a life-and-death conflict.

At the end of his first term in Congress—during which he had taken part in many important debates besides those on the Slavery question, and rapidly risen in the esteem of his fellow-legislators—Abraham Lincoln determined not to seek re-election for a while; and once more we find him in Springfield. Here, he resumed the practice of his profession as a lawyer, and at the same time—having probably realised, when in Washington, his inferiority in certain respects to some of the accomplished statesmen with whom he came in contact there—he again applied himself to further mental improvement. Perhaps, too, as one of his biographers suggests, "he clearly foresaw at this period the tremendous struggle which was approaching between North and South, and wished to prepare himself for some great part in it."

He does not appear to have taken any prominent part in politics for the present. Now and then Mr. Douglas would come forward and speak, in different parts of Illinois, in favour of Slavery extension; and then Lincoln would always put in an appearance, and deliver a speech in reply; he was also to the fore in various social movements connected with the State. With these exceptions, he devoted himself almost exclusively to study and to the pursuit of his profession.

But this was not to last long; and the day soon came when, owing to a grave step which had been taken by the Slave Party, he felt that it was his duty to again enter the political arena.

How serious the step alluded to was, will be understood when I tell you that it was no other than the passing (in 1854) of a Bill brought forward in Congress by Mr. Douglas, which put aside the Missouri Compromise.* In other words, the law which had, since 1820, legalised Slavery in certain portions only of the United States, was now, under the powerful influence of the slave-owners, repealed by the Legislature in order that the Slave Trade might be extended to certain Free Territories of the West, and particularly to Kansas and Nebraska.

Nominally, the terms of this new measure—known as the Kansas-Nebraska Bill—left the people of the Territories affected by it at liberty to decide for

* See p. 50.

themselves by vote whether or not Slavery should be tolerated ; but it was soon apparent that the South intended to take such advantage of the law as would enable them, if successful, to gain the very ends they had in view.

Hitherto, many Northerners—not because they upheld Slavery, but because, it being recognised by the Constitution of the country, they felt that the South would have a genuine grievance against them if they advocated its abolition—had been unwilling to join hands with the party who were in favour of entirely suppressing it ; and, had the terms of the Missouri Compromise been adhered to, they would have been quite content to allow existing arrangements to remain as they were. Above all, they were not anxious to provoke the South, with whom their one wish was to live at peace. But the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was the signal not merely for protest, but for action on the part of the Northern States. They could not help realising now that the actual aim of the Slavery party was to extend their operations to the Free Territories and, for aught they knew, to eventually spread them over the whole Union.

That Abraham Lincoln could regard such a startling condition of affairs as had now been reached with calmness was impossible. He foresaw the train of evils which the passing of this measure laid for his country, and well knew that the North would never consent to such further extension of Slavery.

He felt, too—and as a patriot this was more important still—that unless the Slavery party were checked on this forward march on which they were bent, the American Union itself would be endangered through the strife which would be stirred up by it.

So with all his heart and soul he opposed the Kansas-Nebraska measure; and one of his first actions was to attack Mr. Douglas in a most vigorous and earnest speech, when the latter had returned from Washington and was speaking in Springfield in defence of the Bill. Lincoln is said to have spoken on that occasion with such power and fervour as he had never exhibited before, and to have completely demolished the arguments by which Douglas had endeavoured to support his case. Not content with this he followed his antagonist from place to place, speaking against the Bill wherever he appeared, and pointing out to his hearers the evils and strife which it would inevitably produce; until at length the whole of Illinois was so stirred up by his eloquence that the Democratic party, who had hitherto been in power, were overthrown, and the Whigs being in the ascendant, Abraham Lincoln was persuaded to again become a Member of the State Legislature, and then—in 1855—was brought forward as a candidate for the United States Senate.

He was not, however, elected, for there were two other candidates—the one belonging to his own side, the other to the followers of Douglas; and finding that

by withdrawing from the election his party could be enabled to win the victory, he did so. But this sacrifice of his own interests for the sake of the cause he had at heart was neither lost nor forgotten ; it only raised him higher in popular regard. And when soon afterwards the Whigs were thoroughly organised under the name of the Republican party, Abraham Lincoln became their acknowledged leader.

Shortly afterwards, during the Presidential election (1856) he was, much to his own surprise, nominated for the Vice-Presidency ; and though not elected, the large number of votes which he obtained were solid proof of his growing popularity. He took a prominent part in the contest, speaking frequently against the extension of Slavery, and on one occasion concluded a speech with these telling words : " Yes, we will speak for Freedom, and against Slavery, as long as the Constitution of our country guarantees free speech, until everywhere on this wide land the sun shall shine, and the rain shall fall, and the wind shall blow, upon no man who goes forth to unrequited toil."

During this time Lincoln's forebodings as to the results of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise began to be realised. The people of Kansas, who totally disapproved of Slavery, and who had hitherto been living in happiness, quietly carrying on their agricultural and other pursuits, now found themselves hedged round by disorder of every description. For

no sooner did Mr. Douglas's measure become law than the South showed in what manner they had determined to accomplish their purpose.

Missouri, which was a Slave State, was in close proximity to Kansas; and the Southern party immediately caused a large number of persons, known as "border ruffians," to cross the frontier into the latter State. Under the pretence of becoming settlers, it had been arranged that these men were, first, to vote in favour of Slavery being permitted, and next, by resorting to acts of violence, to make the existence of the non-Slavery settlers intolerable, and by such means to drive them out of Kansas. And this programme they now commenced to carry out; whereupon the North, finding that the people of Kansas were being plundered, their houses burned, and all kinds of atrocities committed in their midst, sent men and arms to assist them in the defence of their houses and property. Northern emigrants also came to Kansas, and voted against the introduction of Slavery, and thus, to some extent, destroyed the effect of the pro-Slavery voting of the "border ruffians." The result was a condition of affairs, described as "virtual civil war," that was destined to last for some years, and after many struggles, to terminate in the adoption by the people of Kansas of a Constitution which excluded Slavery. Much bitterness was in the meantime being stirred up throughout the United States; and the relations between North and South were becoming

more unsatisfactory every month. Nor were they improved by an incident which occurred one day in Congress during the discussion of the Kansas question. The leading Senator from the State of Massachusetts, Mr. Sumner, delivered a speech, which Mr. Butler, a Senator of South Carolina, considered to be personally offensive to himself; whereupon a Mr. Brooks, also a Representative from South Carolina, struck Mr. Sumner with a cane, whilst in his seat in the Senate; the blow being so severe that he suffered from its effects for some years.

A decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, in what was afterwards known as the Dred Scott case, concerning the status of the negroes, also gave rise to additional bad feeling towards the Slave party. This judgment declared that by law "the negro had no rights or privileges, but such as those which the political power of the Government might choose to grant to him, and that Congress had no more right to prohibit the carrying of slaves into any State or Territory than it had to prohibit the carrying of horses, or other property, whose secured possession was guaranteed by the Constitution." The decision startled the Northern people of the United States, and led to increased efforts being made to prevent Slavery from spreading into the Western Territories.

It was while the Kansas struggle was going on that—on the 16th of June, 1858—the Republican State Convention met at Springfield, and Abraham

Lincoln was again nominated for the United States Senate. It was on the following evening that the "House divided against itself" speech was delivered by him before the Convention. The opening of this memorable address was in these words, and, of course, referred to the clouds which already darkened the State of Kansas, and were rapidly gathering throughout the length and breadth of the country :

"If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far on into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to Slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this Government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house will fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of Slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

This was a bold speech; but Lincoln was not the man to hesitate in giving expression to what he really felt; and though some of the more moderate of his party at first thought that he had exceeded the bounds of prudence in his remarks, yet all soon began to acknowledge their wisdom and truth. Their effect indeed was wonderful; and to Abraham Lincoln the Republican party of Illinois henceforth looked for guidance in their contest against the Slave party, and in their defence of the Union which appeared to be in jeopardy. For it was now becoming abundantly clear that the powerful Southerners were prepared to risk their all either in causing Slavery to be extended, or, failing that, in bringing about the secession of the Slave States from the Union.

At the same time that Lincoln was brought forward as a candidate for the Senate, his old rival, Douglas, also entered into the contest in opposition to him. The two canvassed the States together, and wherever the one spoke, the other made a speech in reply, Douglas supporting the Slavery party and Lincoln denouncing it. The Kansas struggle was now at its height, and public interest being centred in the Slave question, their joint debate attracted the attention of the whole country. It was during this campaign that Lincoln openly declared that "he was impliedly if not expressly pledged to a belief in the right and duty of Congress to prohibit Slavery in all the United States Territories."

But though the result of the contest was a majority for Lincoln of over 4,000 votes given by the people themselves, yet owing to there being disproportionate representation in the State Legislature, the Members of which had the final election in their hands, Douglas was returned to the Senate. Lincoln was naturally somewhat disappointed and aggrieved at his defeat; and when it was afterwards referred to by a friend, he said that, "he felt like a boy who had stamped upon his toe—it hurt him too much to laugh, and he was too big to cry!"

Speaking of the contest between Lincoln and Douglas, a prominent politician of Illinois, in a speech delivered in 1863, said, "Douglas went through this campaign like a conquering hero. He had his special train of cars, his band of music, his bodyguard of devoted friends, and a cannon carried on the train, the firing from which announced his approach to the place of meeting. Such a canvass involved necessarily very large expenditure; and it has been said that Douglas did not spend less than fifty thousand dollars in it. Some idea of the frugal habits of Mr. Lincoln may be gathered when I tell you that at the close of this electoral campaign, which lasted for several months, Mr. Lincoln said, with the idea apparently that he had been somewhat extravagant, 'I do not believe that I have spent a cent less than five hundred dollars in this canvass!'"

The speeches of Lincoln during this contest had

created the greatest enthusiasm for the cause he was advocating ; and throughout the canvass he earned a reputation as an able and eloquent debater second to that of no man in America. His "house divided against itself" speech had, too, been echoed in the remotest corners of the country, and his energetic fight with Douglas had, we are told, "even inspired hope in the far-off cotton and rice fields of the South, where the toiling blacks, to use the words of Whittier, began even more eagerly than ever to pray for liberty :

“ ‘ We pray de Lord He gib us signs
Dat some day we be free ;
De Norf wind tell it to de pines,
De wild duck to de sea.
We tink it when de church bell ring,
We dream it in de dream,
De rice bird mean it when he sing,
De eagle when he scream. ’ ”

Nearly two years now passed by, during which Lincoln enlarged his experience of the country and the people by travelling in various parts of the United States, where he delivered lectures, and gave addresses. Among other places he went to New York (in which city he delivered a most important speech) besides several large towns ; he also paid a visit to Kansas, where the free settlers received him with open arms ; and wherever he appeared he most favourably impressed all hearers. When in New York he visited one of the charitable institutions of the city, known as the Five Points Home of Industry, and the Superinten-

dent of the Sabbath School there wrote this account of the event: "One Sunday morning I saw a tall remarkable-looking man enter the room and take a seat among us. He listened with fixed attention to our exercises, and his countenance expressed such genuine interest that I approached him and suggested that he might be willing to say something to the children. He accepted the invitation with evident pleasure; and coming forward began a simple address which at once fascinated every little hearer, and hushed the room into silence. His language was strikingly beautiful and his tones musical with intense feeling. The little faces would droop into sad conviction as he uttered sentences of warning, and would brighten into sunshine as he spoke cheerful words of promise. Once or twice he attempted to close his remarks but the imperative shout of 'Go on! Oh, do go on!' would compel him to resume. As I looked upon the gaunt and sinewy frame of the stranger and marked his powerful head and determined features now touched into softness by the impressions of the moment, I felt an irrepressible curiosity to learn something more about him, and while he was quietly leaving the room I begged to know his name. He courteously replied, 'I'm Abraham Lincoln from Illinois.' "

In the meantime his admirers and friends in Illinois had met together and determined upon bringing him forward as their candidate for the highest office in the Union; and the 9th of May, 1860 was a

great day for Lincoln. Assembled at Decatur on that morning, in a big building specially erected for the occasion and called "The Wigwam," were five thousand people, comprising the Republican State Convention of Illinois; and as soon as they had all gathered together the Governor of the State, who presided, rose and said—

"I am informed that a distinguished citizen of Illinois, and one whom Illinois will ever delight to honour, is present, and I wish to move that this body invite him to a seat on the stand."—Then after a pause he said in a louder tone—"Abraham Lincoln;" on which, we are told the most tremendous applause ensued, while Lincoln was at once lifted up and placed on the platform.

Hardly was this over before an old friend—whom readers will remember—John Hanks—caused cheer after cheer to ring through the building by entering the place carrying on his shoulder two fence rails, which bore this inscription—

"Two Rails, from a Lot made by Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks in the Sangamon Bottom in the year 1830."

Then, when the clamour which had followed the appearance of these rails had ended, it was suggested by some one present that Lincoln should make a speech. On which he rose and in response said—

"Gentlemen, I suppose you want to know something about those things" (pointing to the fence

rails). "Well, the truth is, John Hanks and I did make rails in the Sangamon Bottom—I don't know whether we made these rails or not; fact is, I don't think they are a credit to the maker" (laughing as he spoke), "but I do know this: I made rails then, and I think I could make better ones than these now!"

And after the uproar had abated there followed a formal resolution moved by the chairman, that Abraham Lincoln should be the candidate of the State of Illinois for the Presidency of the United States; and amid applause more tumultuous than ever, this was unanimously agreed to.

On the 16th of the following month there was another great meeting, when the National Republican Convention—numbering, it is said, no fewer than twenty-five thousand men, and having "No Extension of Slavery" for its watchword—assembled at Chicago to finally nominate the man of their choice for the Presidency. There were seven other candidates from different States, one of whom (Mr. W. H. Seward), it was thought, would probably carry the day; but, in the end, Abraham Lincoln was selected and, amidst the wildest enthusiasm, he was declared to be nominated.

Lincoln was at the time in Springfield; and it was with no little anxiety and impatience that he awaited news of the result. But when the glad intelligence at last arrived, though he could scarcely help being moved by it, he was very calm; and after he had

received the congratulations of the many friends who had rushed to offer them, all he said was—"Well, gentlemen, there is a little woman at our house who is probably more interested in this despatch than I am ; and if you will excuse me, I will take it up and let her see it." The "little woman" was his wife ; and in this quiet manner he received the news that he had been nominated for the most important position in the United States.

The choice of Lincoln gave the greatest satisfaction to the Republican Party throughout the country. "Its members," says one of his biographers, "recognised in him a man of firm principles, of ardent love for Freedom, of strict integrity and truth ; and they went into the political contest with a zeal and enthusiasm which were a guarantee of victory ; while the doubt and uncertainty, the divided counsels and wavering purposes of their opponents were the sure precursors of defeat."

On the 6th of November, 1860, the election took place—his old opponent Douglas being once more his formidable competitor—and Abraham Lincoln became, by a large majority, the sixteenth President of the United States—the chosen ruler of over thirty millions of people.

Between the time of his nomination and his entry into the White House at Washington in the March of the following year, an incident of not a little interest occurred, of which mention may be made.

Just before his election, Mr. Newton Bateman, a gentleman holding an official position in Illinois, had an interview with Mr. Lincoln at the Executive Chamber of the State House at Springfield; and, in the course of it, referring to votes which had been given against him by ministers of the Gospel, Lincoln said, with a face full of sadness—"Here are twenty-three ministers of different denominations, and all of them are against me but three." Drawing forth a New Testament from his pocket, he continued—"Mr. Bateman, these men well know I am for freedom in the Territories, freedom everywhere, as free as the Constitution and the laws will permit, and that my opponents are for Slavery. They know this, and yet, with this Book in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me. I do not understand it at all." Here Mr. Lincoln paused—paused for many minutes, overcome with emotion; then he rose, and walked up and down the reception-room in the effort to regain his self-possession. Stopping at last, he said with a trembling voice, and his cheeks wet with tears—"I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and Slavery. I see a storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready. I am nothing; but Truth is everything. I know I am right because I know that Liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God. I

have told them that 'a house divided against itself cannot stand,' and Christ and Reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglas doesn't care whether Slavery is voted up or down, but God cares, and Humanity cares, and I care; and, with God's help, I shall not fail. I may not see the end, but it will come, and I shall be vindicated, and then men will find that they have not read their Bibles right."

Soon after his nomination, Lincoln, feeling a great desire to see his stepmother, then living with her daughter in a distant part of the State, paid her a visit.

This meeting is described as being of the most affectionate character. "Mrs. Lincoln fondled him as 'her own Abe,' and he her as his own mother," says one of his biographers; "and when the time arrived that he must go, the leave-taking between the two was very touching. Mrs. Lincoln seems to have been most reluctant to part from him, and as he was on the point of departing, she said, as with deep emotion she embraced him, that she was sure she would never behold him again, for 'she felt that his enemies would assassinate him'"—a fear which was shared at this time by others of his relatives and friends.

The 11th of February had been fixed for starting on his journey to the White House, and on that morning he left Springfield for Washington, never to return alive, having bidden "farewell" to those who

had gathered around him at the railway-station in these words :—

“My Friends,—No one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To this people I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century. Here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. A duty devolves upon me which is greater perhaps than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He would never have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him, and on the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support ; and I hope you, my friends, will pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain. Again I bid you an affectionate ‘Farewell.’”

CHAPTER VII.

AT THE HELM OF STATE.

THE curtain rises on what is to be the darkest period in the history of the United States—a period during which the whole country—now, as Mr. Lincoln had said, “divided against itself”—is engaged in that most

terrible and most melancholy of all wars—a Civil War.

Hardly had Mr. Lincoln been nominated for the Presidency when the smouldering fire, which, little by little, had been spreading itself over the Southern States, burst out into furious flame; for victory by the North in the Presidential contest had been agreed upon by the South as a signal for immediate action.

In the election of Abraham Lincoln the South saw the destruction of their hopes. They felt that the extension and, perhaps, the very existence of the Slave trade were threatened, and they determined to resist with all their might interference with what they considered to be their rights. In a little while, therefore, after the election, the South Carolina Legislature summoned a State Convention, which met at Charleston, and almost unanimously declared that “the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States under the name of the United States of America, is hereby dissolved;” the alleged reason being the hostility on the part of the successful party to the institution of Slavery. This declaration was followed by the appointment of Commissioners to treat with other Slave States for a withdrawal from the Union, and with the United States Government for a division of national property and of the public debt. By the end of February, 1861, six additional Southern States had decided to secede from the Union; and before long, these seven, having raised

the standard of revolt, organised a Government of their own, known as the Confederate States of America. Then they elected Mr. Jefferson Davis as their President, and made preparations for fighting the Northern, or Federal States, as they were termed ; having first seized all the arsenals, forts, custom houses, post offices, ordnance, material of war, and ships, within the seceding States.

As already explained, the Southern party had been very influential in the country ; and several of their Representatives had held high offices in the preceding Administration. That these had not scrupled to abuse their positions in order to help the cause of the South was now only too clear. Not only had the late Secretary of War—a prominent Southerner—caused immense quantities of arms and ammunition of every kind to be manufactured in Northern arsenals at the expense of the United States Government, and had them removed to the South, where they could be conveniently seized by the Confederates, but the Navy had been scattered in distant seas, the Union Army had been distributed in remote parts of the country, and even the Treasury was empty !

Thus, on entering upon his duties as President at the White House at Washington—in March, 1861—Mr. Lincoln found himself face to face with a gigantic difficulty ; and the task before him was rendered the more perplexing through the reluctance which, in spite of the threatening attitude of the

South, certain sections of the North felt to employ force in dealing with this open rebellion against the Union. Indeed, so great was the dread of Civil War, that some even would have been willing to allow the South to permanently withdraw, if, by such a course, peace could have been preserved. In his inaugural speech, as President, Mr. Lincoln appealed to the latter in a most pathetic manner not to leave the Union ; and on this occasion, he not only told them that he had no intention to invade or oppress the rebellious States, but—though he declared that their secession was void because it was not in accordance with the Constitution of the country, by which the Union must be perpetual—yet, he distinctly intimated to them that “there would be no conflict without being themselves the aggressors,” concluding his address with the following words :

“You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government ; while I have the most solemn one, to preserve, protect, and defend it. I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may strain, it must not break, our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

But his appeal was in vain : the South did not in-

tend to have peace. They had given undeniable evidence of this by their actions in connection with the distribution of war munitions in the South, by the scattering of the Army and Navy, as well as in other ways; while their own so-called President, clearly revealed their intentions by declaring that "they would carry the war where it was easy to advance, and where food for the sword and torch awaited their armies in the densely-populated cities of the North."

And that these were not mere idle words was quickly proved. Only a little over a month after his inaugural address had been delivered—and when, on the ground that the Constitution did not admit of their withdrawal from the Union, the Secretary of State had refused to receive Southern Commissioners, who wished to formally arrange matters with reference to secession—Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbour, held by Northern soldiers, having been besieged by, and refusing to surrender to the Confederates, was bombarded for thirty-four hours, at the end of which time the little garrison of seventy men had to capitulate. This was on the 14th of April, 1861.

By this unprovoked act of war, the whole Northern party, however divided their opinions may have been up to this time, were united in one purpose—the suppression of the Southern outbreak, and the maintenance of the Union; and when, within two

days, a call for seventy-five thousand men was made by the President, it was responded to with patriotic enthusiasm, as were also further drafts of many thousands only a short time afterwards. In the words of Mrs. Caroline Mason, an American poetess—

“ ‘Come to the rescue,’ the cry went forth
Through the length and breadth of the loyal North ;
For the gun that startled Sumter heard
Wakened the land with its fiery word.

* * * * *

“ And each and all to the rescue went
As unto a royal tournament ;
For the loyal blood of the nation stirred
To the gun that startled Sumter heard.”

It is interesting to learn that it was at this crisis that Mr. Lincoln's old opponent, Mr. Douglas, whose views as to Slavery and the South now altered through the attack on Fort Sumter, was one of the first to come to his aid with advice and co-operation. When the President read to him his Proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand men, Douglas replied, “Make it two hundred thousand. You do not know the dishonest purposes of the rebels as well as I do ;” and he and Mr. Lincoln, who, for more than twenty years had been vigorously opposing each other, became henceforth the closest friends.

The rebellion soon began to assume gigantic proportions ; the remaining Southern States, with the exception of four, having thrown in their fortunes with the Confederates ; and soon the “great trouble”

—as Mr. Lincoln sadly described the war—swept over the country.

We must content ourselves with a somewhat brief survey of the events which now followed each other in rapid succession ; for it would need much more space than there is in this volume to tell the whole story of them—to speak of all the great battles which were fought in different parts of the country ; of the terrible loss of life on both sides ; and of the ever-varying incidents of the awful struggle. We shall, however, see, that, desperate though the conflict was, the North—to use the President's words—“kept pegging away” until the Confederates were crushed, and that they did not flinch from their purpose until it was accomplished.

The first important episode of the war, after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, was when the Confederates seized the United States Arsenal at Harper's Ferry—the Navy Yard of Gosport being at the same time destroyed by Union soldiers, to prevent it falling into the hands of the South ; by which the Federals lost a very large quantity of arms, ships, and other property—in all about ten million dollars' worth ; and then came the famous battle of Bull Run, when the North sustained a serious defeat. It has been said, however, that in one respect it was really an advantage to them to have been beaten on the latter occasion, because it made them the more thoroughly realise the magnitude of the task before

them, and thereby stimulated them to exert all their energies in accomplishing it. That Mr. Lincoln regarded the matter in this light is evident. He immediately called for half a million more men ; and such confidence had the people of the North in him that when he applied for authority to make the war "short, sharp, and decisive," Congress passed, almost unanimously, a resolution pledging any amount of money and any number of men necessary to overpower the South.

The North soon after this began to meet with rather more success in their military operations ; and by the end of the year—when their army numbered 640,000 men—they had distributed their forces in what they believed to be advantageous positions for carrying out their plans.

During 1862, however, desperate engagements, both military and naval, took place, and the Federals sustained not a few reverses. The most important of them was in the summer, when the great army of the North, under the command of General M'Clellan, which had been marching towards the city of Richmond—the seat of the Confederate Government and the capital of the South—in the hope of capturing that place was, after a series of sanguinary battles lasting six days, routed with a loss of 15,000 men.

In no way daunted by this disaster, Mr. Lincoln, in July, called for 300,000 men, and in the following month 300,000 more, for the Northern army ; and not

satisfied with this, it was now that he determined on taking the step, which was to prove the greatest act of his life, and for which his name will be blessed and honoured by countless generations.

Up to this time the President—though certain sections of his party had urged him to abolish Slavery—had been unwilling to sanction so grave a measure all at once; for he could not forget that the institution was a constitutional right in certain States, and he had hoped against hope, that ere this the South would have yielded. In that case, for the sake of peace, Slavery could have been allowed to continue, provided no attempts were made to extend it to Free States. It must be remembered that the war had not been waged by Mr. Lincoln, altogether to put down Slavery; it had been undertaken to maintain the Union according to the Constitution of the country, by crushing the Confederates and recovering the seceding States; and, by accomplishing this, keeping the institution within its old limits. But as the war, with all its horrors, went on and its end seemed no nearer, the President was at length led to believe that the time had come when Slavery—which, after all, lay at the very root of the rebellion—ought no longer to be tolerated. Accordingly, having previously released from bondage 3,000 negroes, in the District of Columbia, in which the capital, Washington, is situated, and offered freedom to all coloured men who were willing to serve in the Union armies, he resolved on the measure of Emancipation, which brought

the dispute to its real issue—a fight for or against Slavery.

This most important step was heralded, in September 1862, by a declaration, that in the event of the Confederates refusing to return to their allegiance, by the 1st of January, 1863, a Proclamation would be issued, by the terms of which, all the Slaves in the rebel States would be for ever released from bondage.

The Proclamation was duly published, and the effect of it was to set free four millions of Slaves, many of whom entered the Federal army to take part against their former masters, and contributed not a little to the ability of the North to carry on the war with greater vigour than ever.

Mr. Lincoln had considered that before informing the people of his intentions, it would be better to await news of a victory ; otherwise—especially if the declaration at once followed the reverses which had attended the Federal arms—the South might interpret his action as a bid for the support of the negroes and a sign of weakness. The announcement had therefore been delayed till September 1862, when the news arrived that the Southern army had received a severe check. It is on record that the President had made a solemn vow, that if the Confederates were driven back in Pennsylvania, he would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the Slaves. And when, on the 1st of January 1863, he signed the famous Proclamation of Emancipation—after hours of hand-

shaking during the morning when there had been many callers at the White House—Mr. Lincoln remarked, “The signature looks a little tremulous, for my hand is tired. But my resolution is firm. I told the rebels in September that if they did not return to their allegiance and cease murdering our soldiers, I would strike at this pillar of their strength. The promise shall now be kept, and not one word will I ever recall.”

Mr. Leland states that “the excitement caused by the appearance of the Proclamation was very great. The anti-Slavery men rejoiced as at the end of a dreadful struggle; those who had doubted, became at once strong and confident; whatever trials and troubles might be in store, all felt assured that Slavery was virtually at an end.” Another American writer says—“Human eloquence is powerless to express the blissful gratitude with which the Proclamation was received by the long-oppressed race, whom it lifted up from the degradation of Slavery to the glorious heights of Freedom;” and the following lines, from a stirring poem which appeared at the time in *The Continental Magazine*, gave expression to the feelings excited by the Proclamation:—

“Now who has done the greatest deed
Which History has ever known?
And who in Freedom’s direst need,
Became her bravest champion?
Who a whole Continent set free?
Who killed the curse and broke the ban
Which made a lie of Liberty?—
You, Father Abraham, are the man!”

The year 1863 saw the war being still bitterly carried on ; and owing to repeated checks which they were at this time meeting with, and the troubles and doubts that overwhelmed them, the North were beginning to feel somewhat disheartened. They were buoyed up with hope, however, by Mr. Lincoln, in whose ability to steer the ship of State in its hour of peril they had implicit confidence ; and not many months passed before the dawn of brighter days came to them. On the 3rd of July, 1863, when the Confederate forces had invaded Maryland and Pennsylvania, they were overpowered at Gettysburg, with very heavy loss ; and this battle destroyed the last hope of the South being able to overcome the North, and was in reality the turning-point of the war.

A piece of ground about seventeen acres in area, and forming a part of the battle-field, was, in the following season, purchased by the State of Pennsylvania for the purpose of making it a burial-ground for those who had fallen in this fight. A solemn dedicatory ceremony was performed on the 19th of November, at which the President and many other State officials were present ; and it was on this occasion that a significant and striking address was delivered by Mr. Lincoln :

“Four score and seven years ago,” said he, “our fathers brought forth upon this Continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we

are engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war.

"We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract.

"The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here ; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain ; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of Freedom ; and that the Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Following the Northern victory at Gettysburg, came further successes at Vicksburg and Port Hudson during the same month ; at which juncture Mr. Lincoln appointed a day to be devoted to general thanksgiving.

CHAPTER VIII.

EPISODES AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

THE life of the President during all this time was, it need hardly be said, full of most harassing anxieties. At no previous period of its history had the country been placed in circumstances so difficult and embarrassing ; and more than ordinary statesmanship was needed to successfully undertake the direction of national affairs during such a crisis. In the midst, however, of all the cares of State, there is ample evidence that Mr. Lincoln was still the same good, kind, "honest Abe," whom we have seen during the earlier stages of his career ; and many anecdotes are recorded concerning his life at the White House, which alike illustrate the nobility of his character and the breadth of his sympathies.*

At one of the public receptions, which were frequently held by the President at the White House, a small pale, delicate-looking boy, about thirteen years old, was seen to be waiting about. Mr. Lincoln saw

*For some of the anecdotes here given I am indebted to F. B. Carpenter's "Six Months at the White House." For others, as well as for many of the facts and incidents narrated in this volume, acknowledgment is made to the excellent biographies of Abraham Lincoln by W. H. Lamon, Dr. Holland, H. J. Raymond, and Charles G. Leland, and to Sterne's "Constitutional History and Political Development of the United States."

him standing, looking feeble and faint, and said : "Come here, my boy, and tell me what you want." The boy advanced, and with bowed head and timid accents, said, "Mr. President, I have been a drummer in a regiment for two years, and my colonel got angry with me, and turned me off. I was taken ill, and have been a long time in hospital. This is the first time I have been out, and I came to see if you could not do something for me." The President looked at him kindly and tenderly, and asked him where he lived. "I have no home," answered the boy. "Where is your father?" "He died in the army," was the reply. "Where is your mother?" continued the President. "My mother is dead also. I have no mother, no father, no brothers, no sisters, and," bursting into tears, "no friends—nobody cares for me." Mr. Lincoln's eyes filled with tears, and he said to him, "Can't you sell newspapers?" "No," said the boy, "I am too weak ; and the surgeon of the hospital told me I must leave, and I have no money, and no place to go to." The scene is described as having been wonderfully affecting. The President took out a card, and after writing on it, told the lad to carry it to certain officials, whom he had enjoined "to care for this poor boy." It is said the face of the little drummer lit up with a happy smile as he received the paper, and he went away convinced that he had one true friend, at least, in the person of the President.

On another occasion two aged plain country people

were awaiting their turn to speak to the President. "Now is your time, dear," said the husband, as Mr. Lincoln dismissed the one preceding them. The lady stepped forward, made a low curtsy, and said, "Mr. President." Lifting his head, and extending his hand, he said, in the kindest tones, "Well, good lady, what can I do for you?" "Mr. President," she resumed, "I feel so embarrassed I can hardly speak. I never spoke to a President before; but I am a good Union woman down in Maryland, and my son is wounded badly, and in the hospital, and I have been trying to get him out, but somehow couldn't; and they said I had better come right to you. When the war first broke out, I gave my son first to God, and then told him he might go to fight the rebels; and now, if you will let me take him home, I will nurse him up, and just as soon as he gets well enough, he shall go right back and help put down the rebellion. He is a good boy, and don't want to shirk the service." Mr. Lincoln's lips quivered as he listened; then he replied: "Yes, yes, God bless you! you shall have your son. What hospital did you say?" It seemed a relief to him to turn aside and write a few words, which he handed to the woman, saying, "There, give that to——; and you will get your son, if he is able to go home with you."

The general in command of one of the Union armies speaking on a certain occasion of Lincoln's merciful treatment of soldiers sentenced to death for

military offences, remarked "During the first week of my command there were twenty-four deserters sentenced by court-martial to be shot, and the warrants for their execution were sent to the President to be signed. He refused. I went to Washington and had an interview; I said 'Mr. President, unless these men are made an example of, the army itself will be in danger. Mercy to the few is cruelty to the many.' He replied, 'Mr. General, there are already too many weeping widows in the United States. Don't ask me to add to the number, for I won't do it.'"

A Senator—the Hon. Mr. Kellogg—while staying in Washington received a despatch from the army one evening to the effect that a young townsman, who had been induced to enlist through his instrumentality, had, for a serious misdemeanour, been convicted by a court-martial, and was to be shot the next day. Greatly agitated, Mr. Kellogg went to the Secretary of War, and urged a reprieve. The Secretary replied, "Too many cases of the kind had been let off," he said; "and it is time an example was made." Finding that all his arguments were in vain, Mr. Kellogg said, "Well Mr. Secretary, the boy is not going to be *shot*—of that I give you fair warning!" Leaving the War Department, he went directly to the White House, although the hour was late. After a long parley with the sentry on duty, he passed in. The President had retired; but the Senator pressed his way through all obstacles to his

sleeping apartment. In an excited manner he stated that the despatch announcing the hour of execution had but just reached him. "This man must not be shot, Mr. President," said he. "I can't help what he may have done. Why, he is an old neighbour of mine; I can't allow him to be shot!" Mr. Lincoln had remained in bed, quietly listening to the protestations of his old friend, who had been in Congress with him, and, at length said, "Well, I don't believe shooting will do him any good. Give me that pen," and so saying, he caused another poor fellow's lease of life to be prolonged.

Mr. Carpenter tells us that one night a Congress official left all other business to ask the President to respite the son of a constituent, who was sentenced to be shot for desertion. He heard the story with his usual patience, though he was wearied out with incessant calls and anxious for rest, and then replied, "Some of our Generals complain that I impair discipline and subordination in the army by my pardons and respites, but it makes me rested, after a hard day's work, if I can find some good excuse for saving a man's life, and I go to bed happy as I think how joyous the signing of my name will make him and his family and friends."

Among the applicants at the White House one day was a poor woman, looking very sad and pale, who, in reply to a question put by the President, said that her husband and three sons had been in the

Union Army, but that the former had been killed, and she felt the need of one of her boys being with her. She therefore begged that her eldest son might be discharged. Mr. Lincoln, says one who was present, looked at the woman's face for a moment, and, in his kindest manner, responded—"Certainly, certainly. If you have given us *all*, and your prop has been taken away, you are justly entitled to one of your boys." And he at once made out the requisite order, and the gladdened mother went her way. In the course of a week or two, however, she appeared at the White House again; for, sad to say, on going herself to the commander of her son's regiment, she found she was too late: the lad had recently been wounded in action and was dead. When the President saw her the second time, he was, it is said, much affected by her appearance, and, on hearing her story, said—"I know what you wish me to do now, and I shall do it without your asking: I shall release to you your second son." And once more he sat down to write an order, and giving the precious paper to her, he said—"Now you have one, and I have one, of the other two boys left; that is no more than right." On which the woman, placing her hand upon his head, and weeping with joy, replied—"The Lord bless you, Mr. Lincoln. May you live a thousand years, and may you always be the head of this great nation!"

In the summer of 1862 a young soldier had been

sentenced to death for sleeping at his post. The President heard of it, and on inquiring found that the facts of the case were different from what they had been at first represented. The lad had been on duty one night, and on the next had taken the place of a companion who was too ill to be on guard. The third night when he was called out he was so tired that sleep overcame him. Mr. Lincoln at once signed his pardon, and sent it to the camp. Having reason, however, to doubt its having reached there, and receiving no answer to a telegram sent by him on the next morning, he actually ordered his carriage and hastened off on a journey of ten miles under a blazing sun. Having done this, he returned to his State duties as though his kind and considerate act were only an ordinary one.

A poor washerwoman had a son who, though weak in intellect, had enlisted ; and for a long time the distressed mother could not hear anything of him, nor was she at first even aware that he had become a soldier. Hearing at length that he had joined the Union army, but not knowing to what regiment he belonged, she made up her mind to go to the President and ask him to restore her boy. At first she could not get an opportunity of speaking to him, but one day she waited for him until he went out walking. Then the poor weeping woman told her story. Lincoln at once, speaking in a gentle tone, and in no way offended at being stopped in the

street, took out a card, and writing on it the lad's name and description with the injunction, "Find this lad, and return him to his mother," had it handed to the War Department; and the woman went on her way rejoicing.

Mr. Lincoln was always glad to find some excuse for granting a pardon, even if not in every case fully deserved. A young soldier who had shown himself very brave on the battle-field, and had been severely wounded, after a while deserted. Having been captured he was sentenced to death, and a petition for mercy was sent to the President. There were apparently no extenuating circumstances: the man had deserted, and for the sake of example his punishment seemed necessary. The President, we are told, when the matter came before him, "mused solemnly until a happy thought struck him." "Did you say he was badly wounded?" he asked of the applicant for a pardon. "He was." "Then, as the Scripture says, that in the shedding of blood is the remission of sins; I guess we'll have to let him off this time!"

Only on one occasion, it is said, did the tender-hearted President refuse mercy when appealed to in this manner. A man who had been a notorious slave-trader had been sent to jail as well as fined one thousand dollars. When his term of imprisonment came to an end, he was unable to pay the fine. He thereupon wrote a pitiful letter to Mr. Lincoln, acknow-

ledging his guilt, but begging for its remission. The President, we are told, received the petition unmoved, and said, "I could forgive the foulest murder for such an appeal, for it is my weakness to be too easily moved when asked to be merciful ; but the man who would go to Africa, and rob her of her children to sell them into endless bondage, with no other motive than that of getting dollars and cents, is so much worse than the most depraved murderer that he may die in jail before I will give him liberty !"

That Mr. Lincoln could be severe when occasion required it, was also shown in his reproof of an insolent officer who called at the White House one day. The man had been dismissed from the service, and had prepared an elaborate defence of himself. When he had finished reading it, Mr. Lincoln replied that, even upon his own statement of the case, the facts would not warrant any executive interference. Disappointed, and considerably crestfallen, the man withdrew. A few days afterwards he made a second attempt to alter the President's decision, going over substantially the same ground, and occupying about the same space of time, but without accomplishing his end. A third time he succeeded in forcing himself into Mr. Lincoln's presence, who with great forbearance listened to another repetition of the case to its conclusion, but made no reply. Then turning very abruptly, the man said, "Well, Mr. President, I see you are fully determined not to

do me justice!" This was too much, even for Mr. Lincoln, who thereupon quietly arose, laid down a package of papers which he held, and seizing the officer, marched him forcibly to the door, saying, as he ejected him into the passage, "Sir, I give you fair warning never to show yourself in this room again. I can bear censure, but not insult!" Frightened as well as surprised at such well-deserved punishment, the man begged for his papers, which he had dropped. "Begone, sir," said the President, "your papers will be sent to you. I never wish to see your face again!"

Mr. Lincoln grieved incessantly over the sufferings of his country and of her sons in the battle-field, and was often most melancholy and depressed in consequence. When on one occasion he was begged, by an energetic lady, for a soldiers' hospital in her own State, she tried to enforce her argument by saying—"If you will grant my petition you will be glad as long as you live." To this he replied, bowing his head with an indescribable look of sadness—"I shall never be glad any more!" One who knew the President—speaking of his anxious days while at the White House, says—"These four years of labour and responsibility told even upon Mr. Lincoln's strength and vigour. He left Illinois for Washington with a frame of iron and nerves of steel. His old friends who knew him as one who was a stranger to illness, who had seen him on the prairies and before the

Illinois Courts full of life, genial, and sparkling with fun—now saw the wrinkles on his forehead deepened into furrows; the laugh of the old days had lost its heartiness; anxiety, responsibility, care, and hard work, had worn upon him; and the nerves of steel had at times become irritable. He had had no respite, had taken no holidays: while others fled away from the dust and heat of the capital, he stayed. He would not leave the helm until all danger was past, and the good ship of State had made her port."

In the course of an address on Mr. Lincoln, delivered by him in Philadelphia after his death, the Hon. W. D. Kelly said—"The President was a large and many-sided man, and yet so simple that no one, not even a child, could approach him without feeling that he had found in him a sympathising friend. I remember that I apprised him of the fact that a lad, the son of one of my townsmen, had served a year on board the gun-boat *Ottawa*, and had been in two important engagements: in the first as a powder-monkey, when he had conducted himself with such coolness that he had been chosen as captain's messenger in the second; and I suggested to the President that it was in his power to send to the Naval School annually three boys, who had served at least a year in the Navy. He at once wrote on the back of a letter from the Commander of the *Ottawa* which I had handed to him, to the Secretary of the Navy—

'If the appointments for this year have not been made, let this boy be appointed.'

"The appointment had not been made, and I brought it home with me. It directed the lad to report for examination in July. Just as he was ready to start, his father looking over the law, discovered that he could not report until he was fourteen years of age, which would not be until September following. The poor child sat down and wept; he feared that he was not to go to the Naval School. He was, however, soon consoled by being told that 'the President would make it all right.'

"It was my fortune to meet the little fellow the next morning at the door of the Executive Chamber with his father. Taking him by the hand—he was short for his age, and dressed in sailor's blue pants and shirt—I advanced with him to the President, who sat in his usual seat, and said—'Mr. President, my young friend, Willie Bladen, finds a difficulty about his appointment. You have directed him to appear at the school in July; he is not yet fourteen, however.' But before I got half of this out, Mr. Lincoln, laying down his spectacles, rose and said—'Bless me! is this the boy who did so gallantly in those two great battles? Why, I feel that I should bow to him, and not he to me!' (The little fellow had made a graceful bow.)

"The President took the papers at once, and as soon as he learned that a postponement till September

would suffice, made the order that the lad should report in that month. Then putting his hand on Willie's head, he said, 'Now, my boy, go home and have good fun during the two months, for they are about the last holidays you will get!' The little fellow bowed himself out, feeling that the President of the United States, though a very great man, was one whom he would nevertheless like to have a game of romps with."

Children always found a real friend in Mr. Lincoln. A woman whose husband was about to be unjustly shot, had waited with her baby in her arms for three days in the Presidential ante-room, but during that time she had had no opportunity of seeing Mr. Lincoln. Late in the afternoon of the third day, the President in going through the passage to his private room for refreshment, heard the child cry. He instantly went straight back to his office, and rang the bell for the attendant, named Daniel. "Is there a woman with a baby in the ante-room, Daniel?" said he. The man said there was, and knowing about her case, he added that her errand was one of life and death and that he ought to see her. He ordered her in immediately; she told her tale, and her husband was pardoned. As she came out of the room with her eyes lifted up, her lips moving in prayer, Daniel went up to her, and pulling her shawl, told her who was her advocate, "Madam," said he, "it was the baby who did it!"

On one of the President's reception days, three little girls, the daughters of an artisan, went to the White House ; and it is said, that after timidly looking about here and there, first at Mr. Lincoln, then at the people around them, they were on the point of being swept along by the crowd without having offered him their hands as others did. On which the President, who had seen them, called out, " Little girls, are you going to pass me without coming up to me ? " He then, leaving all others around him unnoticed, stooped down and shook the hand of each of the children.

Mr. Lincoln gave many proofs of his delicacy of feeling, and of his invariable politeness to every one of whatever rank. Mr. Carpenter says he was always touched by the President's manner of receiving the salute of the military guard at the White House. Whenever he appeared, either in going out of, or in returning to his official residence the sentry would of course " present arms." Mr. Lincoln never failed to acknowledge the salute with a peculiar bow and touch of the hat, no matter how frequently it might occur during the day.

Says one of Lincoln's admirers in speaking of him : " This great Hercules of a man had a heart as kind and tender as a woman's. Sterner men thought it was a weakness. It saddened him to see others suffer, and he shrank from inflicting pain. One summer day walking along the shaded path, leading from the Executive mansion to the War Office, I saw the tall

awkward form of the President seated on the grass under a tree. A wounded soldier, seeking back pay and a pension, had met Mr. Lincoln, and having recognised him asked his counsel. The President at once sat down, examined the papers of the soldier, and telling him what to do, sent him to the proper bureau with a note which secured proper attention."

During one of his receptions there was such an unusually large number of persons present, that it was necessary to do without the customary hand-shaking. Mr. Lincoln had been standing for some time acknowledging the bows of the crowd, when his eye fell upon a couple who had entered unobserved—a wounded soldier and his widowed mother. Before they could pass out he made his way to where they stood ; and "taking each of them by the hand, with a delicacy and cordiality which brought tears to many eyes, he assured them of his interest and welcome. Governors, Senators, and Diplomats, passed with simply a nod ; but that pale young face he might never see again. To him and to others like him did the nation owe its life ; and Abraham Lincoln was not the man to forget this, even in the crowded and brilliant assembly of the distinguished of the land."

It may seem a little strange to us that it should have been possible for all sorts and conditions of people to be thus able to obtain personal interviews with the Chief of the State ; and surprise was often expressed that he allowed so much of his time to be

taken up in such a way. But Mr. Lincoln held strong opinions on this point, and he considered that in a free country like America every one had a right to be admitted to his presence. Once when discussing the subject he gave his reasons; and they are of some interest as throwing light on what he conceived to be his duties in this respect. "For myself I feel," said he—"though the tax on my time is heavy—that no hours of my day are better employed than those which thus bring me again within the direct contact and atmosphere of the average of our whole people. Men moving only in an official circle are apt to become merely official—not to say arbitrary—in their ideas, and are apter and apter, with each passing day, to forget that they only hold power in a representative capacity. Now this is all wrong. I go into these promiscuous receptions of all who claim to have business of me twice a week, and every applicant for audience has to take his turn as if waiting to be shaved in a barber's shop. Many of the matters brought to my notice are utterly frivolous, but others are of more or less importance, and all serve to renew in me a clearer and more vivid image of that great popular assemblage out of which I sprang, and to which I must return."

Mr. Lincoln's conversation abounded in stories and homely illustrations; and when he desired to emphasise his remarks he would frequently do so, not by elaborate argument, but by means of some pointed

story or parable ; and thus he came to excel in the art of explaining his meaning not only aptly, but in such a manner as to make it clear to the dullest mind. One day he received a visit from a farmer who called at the White House to complain that the Union soldiers in marching past his homestead had taken his horse, and some of his hay ; and he wished to have his claim considered. The President looked at him, half amused, and said, " Why, my good sir, if I should attempt to consider every such individual case, I should find work enough for twenty Presidents. You remind me of a man I knew in my early days in Illinois, one Jack Chase, who when sober and steady was the best timber raftsman on the river. It was quite a risk twenty-five years ago to take the logs over the rapids, but he was skilful with a raft, and always kept her straight in the channel. Finally, a steamer was put on, and Jack—he's dead now, poor fellow—was made captain of her. He always used to take the wheel going through the rapids. One day when the boat was plunging and wallowing along in the boiling current, and Jack's utmost vigilance was being exercised to keep her in the narrow channel, a boy pulled his coat-tail and hailed him with ' Say, Mister Captin, I wish you'd just stop your boat a minute. I've lost my apple over-board ! ' "

A delegation waited on the President one day, for the purpose of pointing out what they deemed to be

the errors and shortcomings of his Administration. The President heard them with much patience, and then replied, "Gentlemen, suppose all the property you were worth were in gold and you had put it in the hands of Blondin to carry across the Niagara Falls on a rope : would you shake the cable or keep on shouting out to him, 'Blondin stand up a little straighter ; Blondin stoop a little more ; go a little faster ; lean a little more to the north ; lean a little more to the south ?' No, you would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off till he was safely over. The Government are carrying an immense weight ; untold treasures are in their hands ; they are doing the very best they can. Don't badger them ; keep silent, and we'll set you safely across."

At one of his morning receptions, Mr. Lincoln had a visitor who introduced himself as one of the President's best friends, and solicited a Government post then vacant, urging his claim for the appointment on the ground that it was solely through the applicant's exertions that he was elected to the Presidency. "Oh, indeed," said Mr. Lincoln, "then I now look upon the man who of all men has crowned my existence with a crown of thorns. No post for you in my gift, I assure you. I wish you good morning."

This chapter may fitly conclude with a little "sermon," which the President is said to have often repeated to his own sons: "Don't drink, don't smoke,

don't chew, don't swear, don't gamble, don't lie, don't cheat. Love God, love your fellow men, love truth, love virtue, and be happy."

CHAPTER IX.

"OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION."

AT the beginning of the year 1864 the Federal Government resolved to make one supreme effort, in order, if possible, to finish the work of suppressing the rebellion; and having called for half a million of men—some of whom were to take the places of others whose term of service was about to expire—the President, who had chosen General Grant to be the Commander-in-Chief, handed to him a commission to lead forth the Northern army. It was over an immense area that this force commenced its operations, which were entered upon with the determination to "hammer continuously against the armed forces of the enemy and his resources, until he should be compelled to submit." A considerable portion of General Grant's army was under the command of General Sherman, and the latter marched forward in one direction, while his chief marched in another.

Dreadful scenes of carnage followed in the series of battles which were now fought in the attempt to

overthrow the South by conquering their army, and to repossess the cities of Richmond and Petersburg, in Virginia ; but, to make the story short, it was not until the following March that the Confederates, at last worn out, were finally beaten. And when, on the 9th of April, 1865, their commander—General Robert E. Lee—made an unconditional surrender of his sole remaining army of twenty-eight thousand men, at Appomatox Court-house, Virginia, a surrender which virtually closed the war, as the submission of the remaining Confederate forces soon followed—the roll call showed that this final, but terrible victory, had been won at a cost of no fewer than ten thousand killed and wounded, of whom the greater number belonged to the South.

On the day after the surrender of Richmond, the President, then on a visit to the army, entered the fallen city. He went there, not in pomp and state, as the chief of the conquering North might well have done, but in the quietest way possible, and accompanied only by his little son and a few officers and sailors. His visit, however, was a memorable one. It was while in Richmond—in the city which had been the stronghold of the Confederates during their rebellion—that he witnessed scenes that must not only have gladdened his tender heart, but must have made him feel that, notwithstanding all the misery it had brought, the great war had indeed not been in vain. For here he saw some of the first outward signs

of the happiness which his Emancipation of the Slaves had brought.

Hardly had he arrived before the freed negroes having quickly heard of his entry into the city, gathered round him, and came rushing with wild cries of delight to welcome him. The scene has been described as inexpressibly touching. The poor creatures, now realising that the Slave party had been overpowered and that they were really free, came, their eyes streaming with tears of joy, shouting, dancing, and crying in loud chorus, "Glory, glory, glory to God ;" others in wild jubilant tones shouting "Hurrah! hurrah! President Linkum hab come." One old negress, standing on the threshold of her humble home, said, with clasped hands, "I thank Thee, dear Jesus, that I behold President Linkum ;" while an aged negro, taking off his hat as the President passed by, and bowing, invoked blessings on "Massa Linkum," with tears that meant even more than his words.

After the fall of Richmond, Mr. Jefferson Davis, the so-called President of the Confederate States, escaped to the South. He was afterwards captured ; but he, and other leaders of the rebellion were imprisoned for only a short time. The President, so anxious was he for peace to be restored to the country, and so willing was he to "let bygones be bygones," would, there is no doubt, have been quite satisfied if the Southern chief had contrived to make good his escape. What

his own feelings on this point were, he amusingly expressed in a reply made to an inquiry—put to him at the time of General Lee's defeat—as to “what he would now do with Davis.” Said he—

“There was a boy in Springfield, who saved up his money and bought a 'coon (raccoon), which, after the novelty wore off, became a great nuisance. He was one day leading him through the streets, and had his hands full to keep clear of the little vixen, who had torn his clothes half off him. At length he sat down on the curb-stone, completely fagged out. A man passing was stopped by the lad's disconsolate appearance, and asked the matter. ‘Oh,’ was the reply, ‘this 'coon is such a trouble to me.’ ‘Why don't you get rid of him, then?’ said the gentleman. ‘Hush!’ said the boy; ‘don't you see he is gnawing his rope off? I am going to let him do it, and then I will go home and tell the folk that he got away from me!’”

And so the cruel Civil War ended—a war by which not only was the rebellion of the South crushed and the Union preserved, but Slavery entirely abolished; for it was just before the final victory had been won that an Act of Congress was passed by which every one throughout the country, including the States in rebellion, was declared to be for ever free.

In the meantime another important occurrence had happened. A nomination for President had taken place in November, 1864; and in spite of their

waning fortunes, the Southern party had made a supreme effort to regain the ascendancy lost four years previously. Their endeavours had, however, been in vain; indeed it was evident from the first that Mr. Lincoln, who possessed their confidence and respect, would be triumphantly returned by the people.

It was during the sittings of the Baltimore Convention which nominated him for this election that he made the following reply to the representatives of the National Union League. It is of interest as containing the phrase about "swapping horses while crossing the river"—which has become proverbial—and referred, of course, to the undesirability of changing Presidents during a great war:—"I do not allow myself," he said, "to suppose that either the Convention or the League have concluded to decide that I am either the greatest or the best man in America; but, rather, they have concluded that it is not best to swap horses while crossing the river, and have further concluded that I am not so poor a horse but that they might make a botch of it in trying to swap!"

As the champion of the rights of the poor Slaves, it can be well understood how the President was now regarded by the negro population; and throughout the length and breadth of the land the most enthusiastic affection towards him was shown by them. We are told that at his usual New Year's Day reception at the White House on the 1st of January, 1864, the

poor blacks "waited round the door in crowds to see their great benefactor, whom they literally worshipped as a superior being." And when, later on in the day, a few of the bolder of them, venturing into the reception hall, found that, for the first time in their history, blacks as well as whites were welcomed by the President, their astonishment and gladness were indescribable. One who was present when they entered says: "For nearly two hours Mr. Lincoln had been shaking the hands of the white visitors, and had become excessively weary; but here his nerves rallied at the unwonted sight, and he welcomed the motley crowd with a heartiness which made them wild with exceeding joy. They laughed and wept, and wept and laughed, exclaiming through their blinding tears: 'God bless you! God bless Abraham Lincoln! God bless Massa Linkum!'"

In the same year he was presented by the negroes of Baltimore with a beautiful copy of the Bible. It was most elaborately bound; and, in addition to having bands of solid gold on its corners, there were two massive golden plates upon it. On one of these there was a design representing the President in the act of removing the shackles from a slave, while at his feet was a scroll with the word "Emancipation" on it; on the other were inscribed the following words:—

"To Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, the friend of Universal Freedom. From the

loyal coloured people of Baltimore, as a token of respect and gratitude. Baltimore, July 4, 1864."

The Bible was presented by a deputation of negroes, comprising three clergymen and two laymen ; and Mr. Lincoln's closing words in response to their address are of much interest, as showing how great was his reverence for the Holy Scriptures. "The Bible," said he, "is the best gift which God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us from this Book. But for that Book we could not know right from wrong. All those things desirable to man are contained in it. I return you my sincere thanks for this very elegant copy of the great Book of God which you present."

An instance of the President's kindness to a coloured man related by a Chicago editor may be mentioned. This gentleman dropped in upon Lincoln one day, and found him busily engaged in counting some money. "I am doing something," said he, "out of my usual line, but a President of the United States has a multiplicity of duties not specified in the Constitution or Acts of Congress : this is one of them. The money before me belongs to a poor negro who is a porter in one of the departments (the Treasury), and who is very ill with the small-pox. He is now in the hospital, and could not draw his pay because he could not sign his name. I have been at considerable trouble to overcome the difficulty, and get

it for him ; I have at length succeeded in cutting 'red tape,' as you newspaper men say. I am now dividing the money and putting by a portion in an envelope labelled with my own hands, according to his wish."

On the 4th of March, 1865, Abraham Lincoln entered upon his second term as President—at a time when, although the war had not ended, yet there was every prospect of peace not being afar off. He had been returned by an overwhelming majority—larger than was ever given before to a candidate for the Presidency ; and in the full knowledge that all his acts during the war had met with the approval of his countrymen, the future looked brighter for him than it had for many years. And when on the 11th of April—two days after the surrender of General Lee—he made a speech in Congress in which he intimated that he was desirous that the States which had seceded should be treated with leniency and restored to their proper relations with the central Government as soon as possible, it was plain that he was looking forward with hopefulness to an era of happiness for every one of his countrymen.

But at that moment a terrible calamity was at hand. On the 14th of April, while all the North was rejoicing over the return of peace, the sweeping away of Slavery, and the near prospect of the restoration of the Union, while bells were ringing out and salvoes of

artillery were booming forth the wild echoes of the people's joy, a dreadful deed was being planned.

Often, during the progress of the war, Mr. Lincoln and members of his Cabinet had received from different persons belonging to the Southern party, threats of death and personal violence; and so long as the struggle lasted, the lives of Mr. Lincoln and his colleagues were in constant danger. For it can never be forgotten that not only were some of the Confederates guilty during the war of many acts that can only be branded as barbarous and inhuman, but, as stated by an American writer, a reward was actually offered in one of the Southern papers for the murder of the President, Vice-President, and Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State. Mr. Lincoln was well aware of his peril during this period, and on one occasion when referring to the threatening letters sent to him he said, that he "was in regular receipt of them, and came at length to look for a regular instalment of this kind of correspondence."

The war was now, however, to all intents and purposes over; the right hand of goodwill and fellowship had been held out by the North; and apprehension that any danger of this kind remained had rapidly abated.

But in the breasts of some few of the desperate men of the South there yet lurked the spirit of rebellion; and the fact that the North were victorious only incensed them and made them thirst for vengeance upon

the man who had succeeded in overthrowing them and frustrating their purposes.

And so these men—these black-hearted murderers—eager in their fury for the unsuspecting victim, lost no time in arranging their plans; and now the day and the hour were fixed when the foul plot—no other than the assassination of the President—was to be carried out.

The 14th of April—the anniversary of the fall of Fort Sumter four years previously, when the war had first broken out—had been set apart as a public holiday, and among other public amusements in Washington which had been prepared for the evening was a special performance at Ford's Theatre, at which it was announced that Mr. Lincoln and other prominent personages would be present.

The curtain had risen: the President—who, on his arrival, had been received with loud greetings by the assembled people—had taken his seat in a box with his family and some friends, and then, for a while, all were absorbed in the play that was being performed.—No, not all. One person, at least, among that vast audience paid little heed to what was being enacted on the stage.

Hardly had the President been in his box an hour, when—having secured admission to the outer door by deceiving the attendant—there crept up behind him a man, John Wilkes Booth, an actor; and the next moment the sound of a pistol rang

through the building, and soon told an awful tale. Placing his weapon over the President's chair, the miscreant had shot him through the back of the head!

At first the audience, though startled, did not understand what had happened, and thought it part of the performance; but they were quickly undeceived by the assassin, who now rushed to the front of the box, and leaped on to the stage, exclaiming—" *Sic semper tyrannis!*" ("So be it always with tyrants!") following this by brandishing a dagger, and adding—"The South is avenged!" Then he dashed through the doors of the building, and escaped.

No words can describe the scenes that ensued; for it was quickly made known that not only was the President unconscious from the moment he was struck down, but that there was no hope whatever of his recovery. And to add to the thrilling excitement of the people, the audience who left the building, filled with grief and horror, had no sooner arrived in the street, than news was told them that Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, had also been nearly murdered! Such was the case. While lying helpless, owing to a serious injury he had received through being thrown from his carriage, one of the conspirators—Payne Powell—had entered his room and stabbed him three times whilst he lay in bed!

The gladness which had just come back to the people was now instantaneously turned into sorrow ; and the night of the 14th of April, 1865, was a night of bitterness and gloom in the city of Washington. The many rumours which were abroad before midnight—as to a plot to destroy the whole Cabinet, a fresh outbreak of the rebellion, and many others—all tended to intensify the general anxiety ; and though these reports proved to be without foundation, yet the next day brought with it greater anguish still. On that morning, at twenty-two minutes past seven, the President passed away.

How carefully the plan for the assassination of Mr. Lincoln had been laid will be understood when I tell you that outside of the theatre where the deed was committed, a horse was in waiting for the murderer ; and though, on jumping from the box to the stage he injured himself, Booth contrived to jump into the saddle, and was soon out of sight. Away towards the South he fled, some soldiers following in hot pursuit ; but not until he had reached Lower Maryland, where, for a few days, he found shelter amongst Southern sympathisers, was he discovered. There, in a yard, Booth was found hidden, and, on refusing to surrender when called upon, the building was fired, and he was shot dead by one of the soldiers. Some of his fellow conspirators were soon afterwards arrested—four being subsequently hanged ; and it was ere long made quite clear

that a plot had been formed to take the lives of other members of the Cabinet as well as that of Mr. Lincoln. Indeed, from a letter found in Booth's trunk, not only was this proved, but it was shown, too, that the murder had been planned to take place just before the time when General Lee was defeated, and had only failed then because Booth's accomplices refused to move further in the matter "until Richmond"—the seat of the Confederate Government—"could be heard from."

The land was now filled with woe and lamentation ; and never, before or since, were such scenes witnessed in it. One writer says : " All was gloom and mourning. Men walked in the public places and wept aloud as if they had been alone ; women sat with children on the steps of houses, wailing and sobbing. Strangers stopped to converse and cry. I saw in that day more of the human heart than in all the rest of my life. I saw in Philadelphia a great mob surging idly here and there between madness and grief, not knowing what to do. By common sympathy every family began to dress their houses in mourning and to hang black stuff in all the public places. Before night the whole nation was shrouded in black."

A touching incident occurred just at this time. Mr. Seward who was lying, wounded and ill, in his own house, had not been told of the calamity which had taken place ; his doctors fearing that he was too

weak to bear such a shock. On the following Sunday "he had his bed wheeled round so that he could see the tops of the trees in the park opposite his residence—now putting on their spring foliage—when his eyes caught sight of the national Stars and Stripes at half-mast on the War Department, on which he gazed a while. Then, turning to his servant, he said, 'The President is dead!' The confused attendant stammered as he tried to say 'Nay'; but the Secretary of State could not be deceived. 'If he had been alive he would have been the first to call on me,' he continued; 'but he has not been here, nor has he sent to know how I am; and there is the flag at half-mast.' The statesman had realised the truth, and in silence the great tears coursed down his gashed cheeks as it sank into his heart."

But of all the grief-stricken, none were more cast down than the negroes, for whom it may be said that Abraham Lincoln died. Hundreds of them went about the streets wringing their hands in despair; and many days passed while yet they were inconsolable.

Nor was it in the United States only that sadness thus reigned. From every civilised country there poured forth expressions of sorrow and messages of sympathy; for all felt that the loss of President Lincoln was the world's loss.

It was the desire of some, that Mr. Lincoln's remains should be buried in Washington; but the people

of Illinois having strongly urged the claims of that State to the honour of giving him sepulture, their wishes were complied with. So, after appropriate ceremonies, on a day set apart throughout the country for religious services in honour of the illustrious dead, the body was taken in a draped train from the capital, and slowly passing from State to State, the funeral procession at length reached Illinois.

And there, in one of the cemeteries of Springfield—the spot where his happiest days had been spent, the scene of his earliest successes, and where dwelt those who knew and loved him best—there the good President sleeps.





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